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THE CRITICAL ESSAYS OF A COUNTRY PARSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'THE RECREATIONS OF A COUNTRY PARSON'

Andrew K. B. B. B.

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PREFACE.

IN literature, unlike law, a man frequently begins by judging others, before he tries to do anything for himself. He begins by being a judge: and if he be tolerably successful as a judge, he is advanced (so to speak) to practise at the bar. A young and inexperienced writer in a magazine is for the most part set to review books written generally by much older and wiser men than himself. If he do this tolerably well, he is by and by advanced to the writing of original articles.

It was so with me. When I began to write for *Fraser's Magazine*, a little more than nine years ago, my work was mainly to review books. Gradually, my dear friend the Editor thought I might try to walk alone. And in several volumes, which the public has received with much kindness and favour, the original essays, which I began to write at his suggestion, have been collected and republished. The present volume

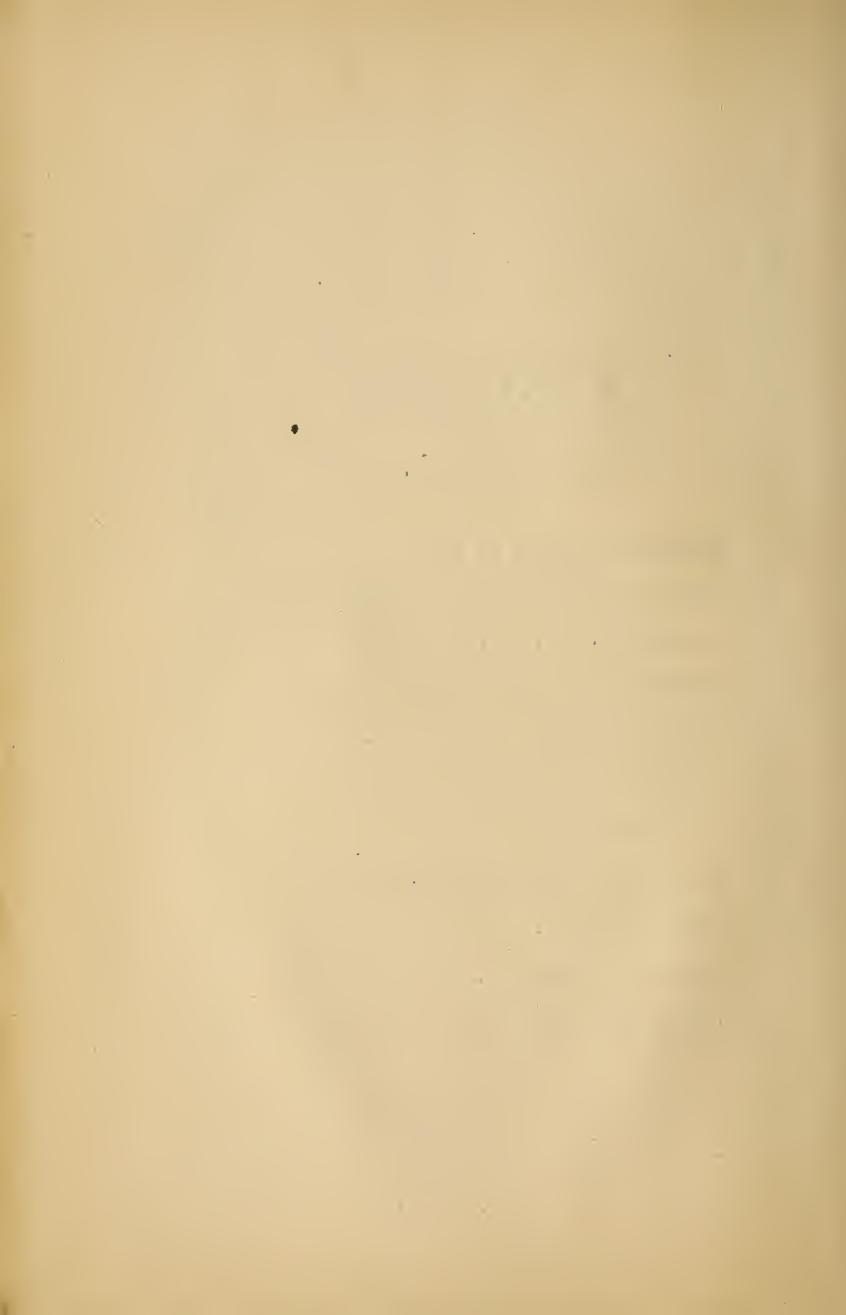
contains a selection from the critical essays of earlier years. These were written in the quiet and leisure of a country parish. They were founded on a thorough examination of the books they attempt to estimate; and they all express what was the writer's honest opinion, unbiassed by any kind of influence. It would have been easy to select smarter essays; but after a few years one looks back with little pleasure on ill-natured writing. Anything of that kind has been excluded from this volume.

A. K. H. B.

March 13, 1865.

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THE
CRITICAL ESSAYS
OF A
COUNTRY PARSON.

I.

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY ON BACON.*

THIS is in every way a remarkable book. We have before us in this volume the most generally popular work of the greatest and meanest man of his time, with a Commentary of Annotations by the man who, of all living authors, approaches in many of his intellectual characteristics nearest to Bacon himself. We find in the writings of Archbishop Whately the same independence of thought which distinguishes the writings of Bacon ; the same profusion of illustration by happy analogies which is characteristic of Bacon's later works ; the same clearness, point, and precision of style. We do not wonder that the accomplished

* *Bacon's Essays* : with Annotations by Richard Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. London : 1857.

prelate, accustomed (as he tells us in his Preface) to write down from time to time the observations which suggested themselves to him in reading Bacon's *Essays*, should have found them grow beneath his hand into a volume ; and we cannot but regard it as a boon conferred upon all educated men, that this volume has been given to the world. Nor must we omit to remark, in this age of readers for mere entertainment, that although the volume be a large one, written by an archbishop, and consisting of comments upon the thoughts of a great philosopher, the book is invested with such an attractive interest, that it cannot fail to prove a readable and entertaining one, even to minds unaccustomed to high-class thought and incapable of severe thinking. The somewhat severe terseness of the *Essays* is relieved by the lighter and more popular tone of the Annotations. Archbishop Whately's mind is of that nature that it takes up each of a vast range of subjects with equal ease, and apparently with equal gusto ; grappling with a great difficulty or unravelling a great perplexity with no more appearance of effort than when lightly touching a social folly, such as might have invited the notice of the author of *The Book of Snobs*, or when playfully blowing to the winds an error not worth serious refutation. Hardly ever in the range of literature have we observed the workings of an intellect in which nervous strength is so combined with delicate tact. We are reminded of Mr. Nasmyth's steam-hammer, which can smash a mass of steel in shivers, or by successive taps drive a nail through a half-inch plank.

We are thankful that in noticing this book, we are concerned rather with the Annotator than with the Essayist; for not without much pain can we look back on Lord Bacon's history. There is something jarring in the mingled feelings of admiration and disgust with which we think of Bacon's greatness and meanness; his intellectual grasp, his keen insight, his wit, his imagination sober in its wildest flights,—his serene temper, his brilliant conversation, his courtly manners, his freedom from arrogance and pretence; and then, on the other side, his cold heart and mean spirit, his low and unworthy ambition, his despicable selfishness, his flagrant dishonesty, his crawling servility, his perfidy as a friend, his sneakiness as a patriot, his corruption as a judge. As to his intellectual greatness there can be no question; though there can be no error more complete than to regard him as the inventor or discoverer of the Inductive Philosophy. He did not invent it; he did not skilfully apply it. His philosophy differed from that which preceded it less in method than in aim; and it is glory enough to have mainly contributed to turn the thoughts and the efforts of thoughtful and energetic men away from the profitless philosophy of the schools to the practical good of mankind. In the *commodis humanis inservire* we have the end and the spirit of the Baconian philosophy.

The *Essays* constitute Bacon's most popular work, if not his greatest. They illustrate in thought and style what was said of him by Ben Jonson, that 'No man ever spoke more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, nor suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he

uttered.' Their subjects are well known. We have in them the thoughts of Bacon on a considerable range of matters, briefly expressed, most of them not occupying more than a page or two. They may have been written, many of them, at a short sitting, though they manifestly give us the results of mature and protracted thought. And here and there occur those pregnant, suggestive sentences which Archbishop Whately has taken as texts for his own observations. The Archbishop reminds us in his Preface, by way of guarding himself from the imputation of presumption in adding to what Bacon has said on many subjects, that the word 'Essay,' which has now come to signify a full and careful treatise on a subject, was in Bacon's days more correctly understood as meaning a slight sketch to be filled up and followed out; a something *to set the reader a-thinking*: and the Annotations, which form by a great deal the larger part of the book, contain the reflections and remarks which have been suggested to the Archbishop in his reading of the *Essays*.

The Annotations are of all degrees, from a sentence or two of inference or illustration, to a pretty full discourse on some topic more or less directly suggested by Bacon. The writer frequently presses opinions which he has elsewhere maintained, and gives many extracts from his own published works. We also find several quotations from other authors, selected (we need not say) with great judgment; and showing us incidentally how wide is the Archbishop's reading, and how completely he keeps up with whatever is valuable in even the lighter literature of the day. In that por-

tion of this volume which is properly Dr. Whately's own, we have the acute observations of a writer who knows both books and men; of a keen observer; a thinker almost always sound amid extraordinary independence and originality; a master of a style so beautifully lucid alike in thought and expression, that we hardly feel, as we follow in the track, how difficult it would be to tread that path without the direction of a guide so able and so sympathetic.

The characteristics of Archbishop Whately are very marked; and his negative characteristics not less so than his positive. No thoughtful man can become acquainted with his writings, without being struck quite as much by what this distinguished prelate *is not*, as by what he *is*. Indeed, what the Archbishop of Dublin is not, is perhaps the thing which at first impresses us most deeply. We discover in his works the productions of a mind which can apply itself to the most diverse subjects, and give forth the soundest and shrewdest sense on all, expressed in the most felicitous forms. We cannot but remark his vast information; and his ripe wisdom, moral, social, and political. But, after all, the thing that strikes us most is, how thoroughly different Archbishop Whately is from most people's idea of an archbishop. We associate with so elevated a dignitary a certain ponderousness of mind: we assume that his intellect must be a machine which by its weight and power is rather unfitted for light work: and we are taken by surprise when we find a prelate so dignified combining with the graver strength of understanding a liveliness, pith, and point,—a versatility,

wit, and playfulness,—which without taking an atom from that respect which is due to his high position, yet put us at our ease in his presence, and fit him for the attractive discussion of almost every topic which can interest the scholar and the gentleman. The general idea of an archbishop is of something eminently respectable: perhaps rather dull and prosy; never startling us in any way by thought or style;—looking at all the world through his own medium, and from his own elevated point of view;—and above all, an intensely *safe man*. The very reverse of all this is Archbishop Whately. Never, indeed, does he say anything inconsistent with his dignified position: but his works show him to us (and we know him by his works alone) as the independent thinker, often thinking very differently from the majority of men,—the thorough man of the world, in the true sense of that phrase,—perfectly versant in the ways of living men, from the tricks of the petty tradesman up to the diplomacies of cabinets and the social ethics of exclusive circles,—at home in the literature of the hour no less than in the weightier letters of philosophy, theology, and politics,—the master of eloquent logic, from the heavy artillery which demolishes a stronghold of error or scepticism, to the light touch that unravels a paradox or puts a troublesome simpleton in his right place,—the master of wit, from the half-playful breath which shows up a little social folly, to the scathing sarcasm which turns the laugh against the scoffer, and which shows the would-be wise as the most arrant of fools.

As for Archbishop Whately's positive characteristics,

we believe that most of his intelligent readers will agree with us when we place foremost among these his acuteness and independence of thought. The latter of these qualities he possesses almost in excess. We believe that to the Archbishop of Dublin the fact that any opinion is very generally entertained, so far from being a recommendation, is rather a reason for regarding it with suspicion. It is amusing how regularly we find it occurring in the prefaces to his works, that one reason for the publication of each is his belief that erroneous views are commonly entertained as to the subject of it. And when we consider how most men receive their opinions upon all subjects ready-made, we cannot appreciate too highly one who, in the emphatic sense of the phrase, *thinks for himself*. It is right to add that there is hardly an instance in which so much originality of thought can be found in conjunction with so much justice and sobriety of thought. In Archbishop Whately's writings we have independence without the least trace of wrongheadedness. His views, especially in his *Lectures on a Future State*, on *Good and Evil Angels*, and on the *Characters of the Apostles*, are often startling at the first glance, because very different from those to which we have grown accustomed: but he generally succeeds in convincing us that his opinion is the sound and natural one; and where he fails to carry our conviction along with him, he leaves us persuaded of his good faith, and sensible that much may be said on his part.

Another striking characteristic of Archbishop Whately is, his extraordinary power of illustrating

moral truths and principles by analogies to external nature. Not even Abraham Tucker possessed this power in so eminent a degree : and the Archbishop's illustrations are always free from that grossness and vulgarity which often deform those of Tucker, who (as he himself tells us) did not scruple to take a figure from the kitchen or the stable if it could make his meaning plainer. We cannot call to mind any English author who employs imagery in such a profuse degree ; yet without the faintest suspicion of that nerveless and aimless accumulation of figures and comparisons which constitutes what is vulgarly termed *floweriness* of style. We have no fine things put in for mere fine-writing's sake. Dr. Whately's illustrations are not only invariably apt and striking : they really *illustrate* his point, they *throw light upon it*, and make it plainer than it was before. They are hardly ever long drawn out ; consisting very frequently in a happy analogy suggested in one clause of a sentence,—the writer being anxious to make that step in his reasoning clear, yet too much bent upon the ultimate conclusion he is aiming at to linger upon that step longer than is necessary to make it so.

To these literary qualifications we add, that Archbishop Whately's information, though evidently reaching over a vast field, is yet minutely accurate in the smallest details ; and without the least tinge of pedantry, the fine scholarship of the writer often shines through his work. It is almost superfluous to allude to the invariable clearness, point, and felicity of the Archbishop's English style, which often warms into elo-

quence of the highest class,—effective and telling, without one grain of claptrap.

We should give an imperfect view of the characteristics of the Archbishop of Dublin, if we did not mention, as a marked one, his intense honesty of purpose; his evident desire to arrive at exact truth, and his carefulness to state opinions and arguments with perfect fairness. Nor should his fearless outspokenness be forgotten. He does not hesitate to call an opponent's argument nonsense when he has proved it to be so. 'Often very silly, and not seldom very mischievous,'* is his description of the speculations of writers of the Emerson school. Our readers are perhaps acquainted with the Archbishop's remarks upon some of the German writers of the present day:—

The attention their views have attracted, considering their extreme absurdity, is something quite wonderful. But there are many persons who are disposed to place *confidence* in anyone, in proportion, not to his *sound judgment*, but to his *ingenuity* and *learning*; qualifications which are sometimes found in men (such as those writers) who are utterly deficient in common sense and reasoning powers, and knowledge of human nature, and who consequently fall into such gross absurdities as would be, in any matter unconnected with religion, regarded as unworthy of serious attention.†

It is impossible to read the Annotations without feeling what an acute observer of men is Archbishop Whately. How carefully, in his passage through life, has his quick eye gathered up the characteristics of

* Preface, p. v.

† *Lectures on the Characters of Our Lord's Apostles*, p. 166.

those persons with whom he has been brought in contact,—their pretensions, foibles, tricks, and errors : and how well he turns his recollections to account, when an example or illustration is needed ! We likewise find many indications that he has been keenly alive, not more to the ways of men than to the little phenomena of nature. We refer our readers particularly to a passage on the degrees of cold which are experienced in the course of a single night, and we wonder how many persons, even of those who generally live in the country, are aware of the following fact :—

Anyone who is accustomed to go out before daylight, will often, in the winter, find the roads full of liquid mud half-an-hour before dawn, and by sunrise as hard as a rock. Then those who have been in bed will often observe that ‘it was a hard frost last night,’ when in truth there had been no frost at all till day-break.—(p. 305.)

And the final feature we remark in Archbishop Whately’s character, is one which must afford the highest satisfaction to all who have, in their own experience, found earnest personal religion existing most markedly in conjunction with great weakness, ignorance, and prejudice ; and to all who have ever mingled in the society of able and cultivated men, who thought that contemptuously to put religion aside was the indication of mental vigour and enlightenment. It is most satisfactory to find the writings of one of the strongest-minded men of his time, all pervaded and inspirited by a religious principle and feeling, earnest, unaffected,

really practical and influential,—as perfectly free from weakness as from self-assertion and self-conceit.

We believe that from this volume of Annotations we could construct a tolerably complete scheme of Archbishop Whately's views on politics, morals, social ethics, and the general conduct of life. We have some indication of his peculiar tastes and bent from observing which among Bacon's *Essays* he passes by without remark. He has little to say concerning 'Masques and Triumphs.' We should judge that his nature has little about it of that 'soft side' which leads to take delight in the recurrence of periodical festal occasions, with their kindly remembrances : we should judge that a solitary Christmas would be much less of a trial to him than it would be to us ; although the instances of Dickens and Jerrold prove that the warmest feeling about such seasons and associations is quite consistent with even extreme opinions on the side of progress. Then the Archbishop passes the Essays on 'Building' and 'Gardens' without a word ; although these subjects would have set many men off into a rhapsody of delighted details and fancies. We judge that Dr. Whately has not a very keen relish for external nature *for its own sake* : his chief interest in it appears to be in the tracing of analogies between the material and moral worlds. The fact that Bacon's ideas both on Building and Gardening are now quite out of date would be only the stronger reason to many men for launching out upon the subject : and how deeply could some sympathise with Bacon in his ideal picture of a princely palace,—one of those delightful palaces in the air about whose

site there are permitted no drawbacks or shortcomings on the part of Nature,—round which ancestral woods grow at a moment's notice, and within whose view noble rivers, fed by no springs, can flow up-hill,—and in whose architecture expense and time need never be thought of. But not many men are likely ever to live in palaces: not many more, perhaps, would care to picture out such a life for themselves: and we prefer to Bacon's palace the delightful description in Mr. Loudon's *Encyclopædia of Architecture* of what he calls the *Beau Ideal English Villa*.

We have long regarded the Archbishop of Dublin as, in several respects, almost the foremost man of this day. It says little for the age's intelligence, that while religious works of inconceivable badness and impudence sell by scores of thousands of copies, Archbishop Whately commands an audience, fit indeed, but comparatively few: for his writings possess a very high degree of that most indispensable, though not highest, of all qualities, *interest*. He is never heavy nor tiresome. Very dull people may understand, though they may not appreciate him. But we are persuaded that his archbishopric lessens the number of his readers. Readers for mere amusement are afraid to begin what has been written by so distinguished a man.

We need hardly say that it is wholly impossible within the limits of a short article to give any just idea, either of the variety of topics which the Archbishop has discussed, or of the manner in which he has discussed them. Bacon himself described his *Essays* as 'handling those things wherein both men's lives and persons are

most conversant :’ and Archbishop Whately’s Annotations, ranging over the same wide field, can be described, as to their scope, in no more definite terms. But the same necessary want of unity which makes the book so hard to speak of as a whole, renders it the easier to consider in its separate parts. It consists of precious detached pieces, each of which loses nothing by being individually regarded. But before glancing at some of the topics which the Archbishop has treated, we wish to give our readers a few specimens of those admirable illustrations of moral truths by physical analogies which form so striking a feature of his writings : —

There are two kinds of orators, the distinction between whom might be thus illustrated. When the moon shines brightly we are apt to say, ‘ How beautiful is this *moonlight* ! ’ but in the daytime, ‘ How beautiful are the trees, the fields, the mountains ! ’ — and, in short, all the *objects* that are illuminated ; we never speak of the sun that makes them so. Just in the same way, the really greatest orator shines like the sun, making you think much of the *things* he is speaking of : the second-best shines like the moon, making you think much of *him* and his *eloquence*. — (p. 327, Annotation on Essay ‘ Of Discourse. ’)

In most subjects, the utmost knowledge that any man can attain to, is but ‘ a little learning ’ in comparison of what he remains ignorant of. The view resembles that of an American forest, in which the more trees a man cuts down, the greater is the expanse of wood he sees around him. — (p. 446, Annotation on Essay ‘ Of Studies. ’)

In an annotation on the Essay ‘ Of Negotiating,’ Archbishop Whately mentions, as a caution to be observed, that in combating, whether as a speaker or a writer, deep-rooted prejudices, and maintaining unpopular truths, the point to be aimed at should be, to adduce

14. *Archbishop Whately on Bacon.*

what is sufficient, and *not much more* than is sufficient, to prove your conclusion. You affront men's self-esteem and awaken their distrust, by proving the *extreme absurdity* of thinking differently from yourself : and

in this way, the very clearness and force of the demonstration will, with some minds, have an opposite tendency to the one desired. Labourers who are employed in *driving wedges* into a block of wood, are careful to use blows of no greater force than is just sufficient. If they strike too hard, the elasticity of the wood will *throw out the wedge*.—(p. 432.)

On the Essay 'Of Praise,' Archbishop Whately remarks, with admirable truth, that it is needless to insist, as many do, upon the propriety of not being wholly indifferent to the opinions formed of us ; as that tendency of our nature stands more in need of *keeping under* than of encouraging or vindicating :—

It must be treated like the grass on a lawn which you wish to keep in good order ; you neither attempt, nor wish to *destroy* the grass ; but you mow it down from time to time, as close as you possibly can, well trusting that there will be quite enough left, and that it will be sure to grow again.—(p. 491.)

On the Essay 'Of Youth and Age,' we have many excellent remarks upon the fact to which the experience of most men bears testimony, that great precocity of understanding is rarely followed by superior intellect in after-life ; and more especially that there is nothing less promising than, in early youth, ' a certain full-formed, settled, and, as it may be called, *adult* character : '—

A lad who has, to a degree that excites wonder and admiration, the character and demeanour of an intelligent man of mature

years, will probably be *that*, and nothing more, all his life, and will cease accordingly to be anything remarkable, because it was the precocity alone that ever made him so. It is remarked by greyhound fanciers that a well-formed, compact-shaped puppy, never makes a fleet dog. They see more promise in the loose-jointed, awkward, clumsy ones. And even so, there is a kind of crudity and unsettledness in the minds of those young persons who turn out ultimately the most eminent.—(p. 405.)

How admirably true! We heartily wish that many injudicious parents would lay this to heart. Who is there who does not remember how, at school and college, some cautious, slow-speaking, never-committing-himself lad, whose seeming precocity of judgment was mainly the result of stolidity of understanding and slowness of circulation, was evermore thrust as a grand exemplar before the view of those whose quicker intellect and warmer heart often got them into scrapes from which *he* kept clear, but promised what *he* could never attain, till the very name of prudence, discretion, reserve, became hateful and disgusting! And how regularly that pattern boy or lad has proved in after-life the dullard and booby which his young companions, in their more natural frank-heartedness, instinctively knew and felt he was even then!

On the Essay ‘Of Friendship’ the Archbishop observes :—

It may be worth noticing as a curious circumstance, when persons past forty, before they were at all acquainted, form together a very close intimacy of friendship. For grafts of *old* wood to *take*, there must be a wonderful congeniality between the trees.—(p. 276.)

On Bacon’s remark, that ‘a man that is young in

years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time,' the Archbishop says :—

And this may be, not only from his having had better opportunities, but also from his understanding better how to learn by experience. Several different men, who have all had equal, or even the very same, experience,—that is, have been witnesses or agents in the same transactions,—will often be found to resemble so many different men looking at the same book. One, perhaps, though he distinctly sees black marks on white paper, has never learned his letters; another can read, but is a stranger to the *language* in which the book is written; another has an *acquaintance* with the language, but understands it imperfectly; another is familiar with the *language*, but is a stranger to the subject of the book, and wants power or previous instruction to enable him fully to take in the author's drift; while another, again, perfectly comprehends the whole.—(p. 400.)

In an annotation on the Essay 'Of Dispatch,' we find some thoughts on the advantage of knowing when to act with promptitude and when with deliberation, and of being able suitably to meet either case. Then the Archbishop goes on as follows :—

If you cannot find a counsellor who *combines* these two kinds of qualification (which is a thing not to be calculated on), you should seek for some of each sort; one, to devise and mature measures that will admit of delay; and another, to make prompt guesses, and suggest sudden expedients. A bow, such as is approved by our modern toxophilites, must be *backed*—that is, made of *two* slips of wood glued together: one a very *elastic*, but somewhat *brittle* wood; the other much less *elastic*, but very *tough*. The one gives the requisite spring, the other keeps it from breaking. If you have two such counsellors as are here spoken of, you are provided with a *backed* bow.—(p. 250.)

Describing the two opposite sorts of men who equally precipitate a country into anarchy, the one sort by

obstinately resisting all innovations, and the other by recklessly hurrying into violent changes without reason, the Archbishop says :—

The two kinds of absurdity here adverted to may be compared respectively to the acts of two kinds of irrational animals, a moth, and a horse. The moth rushes into a flame, and is burned : and the horse obstinately stands still in a stable that is on fire, and is burned likewise. One may often meet with persons of opposite dispositions, though equally unwise, who are accordingly prone respectively to these opposite errors, the one partaking more of the character of the moth, and the other of the horse.—(p. 244.)

Lord Macaulay tells us, and experience confirms his statement, that it is not easy to make a simile go on all fours, and incomparably more difficult to attain strict accuracy when an analogy is drawn out to any length. But Archbishop Whately overcomes this difficulty. There is no hitch whatever in the following comparison, though it runs to very minute and exact details :—

The effect produced by any writing or speech of an argumentative character, on any subject in which diversity of opinion prevails, may be compared—supposing the argument to be of any weight—to the effects of a fire-engine on a conflagration. That portion of the water which falls on solid stone walls, is poured out where it is not needed. That, again, which falls on blazing beams and rafters, is cast off in volumes of hissing steam, and will seldom avail to quench the fire. But that which is poured on woodwork that is just beginning to kindle, may stop the burning ; and that which wets the rafters not yet ignited, but in danger, may save them from catching fire. Even so, those who already concur with the writer as to some point, will feel gratified with, and perhaps bestow high commendation on, an able defence of the opinions they already hold ; and those, again, who have fully made up their minds on the opposite side, are more likely

to be displeased than to be convinced. But both of these parties are left nearly in the same mind as before. Those, however, who are in a hesitating and doubtful state, may very likely be decided by forcible arguments. And those who have not hitherto considered the subject, may be induced to adopt the opinions which they find supported by the strongest reasons. But the readiest and warmest approbation a writer meets with, will usually be from those whom he has *not* convinced, because they were convinced already. And the effect the most important and the most difficult to be produced, he will usually, when he does produce it, hear the least of.—(p. 432.)

We do not know where to find a comparison more correct or more beautiful, than that with which the highly-gifted prelate concludes his remarks on those writers who inculcate morality, with an exclusion of all reference to religious principle. He gives us to understand that the resolute manner in which Miss Edgeworth, in her works, ignored Christianity, was the result of an entire disbelief in its doctrines. But even this sad fact leaves her open to the charge of having falsified poetical truth ; inasmuch as it cannot be denied, that Christianity, true or false, does exist, and does exercise a material influence on the feelings and conduct of some of the believers in it. And to represent all sorts of people as involved in all sorts of circumstances, while yet none ever makes the least reference to a religious motive, is artistically unnatural. The graver objection still remains, that the moral excellences described in non-religious fictions as existing, cannot exist, cannot be realised, except by resorting to principles which, in those fictions, are unnoticed. And the young reader should therefore be reminded

that all these ‘things that are lovely and of good report,’ which have been placed before him, are the genuine fruits of the Holy Land; though the spies who have brought them bring also an evil report of that land, and would persuade us to remain wandering in the wilderness.—(p. 468.)

In pointing out the unfairness to a new colony of making it the receptacle of the blackguards and scapegraces of the old country, by the system of penal transportation, the Archbishop happily illustrates the way in which people of not very logical minds are brought to associate things which are not merely unconnected, but inconsistent:—

In other subjects, as well as in this, I have observed that two distinct objects may, by being dexterously presented, again and again in quick succession, to the mind of a cursory reader, be so associated together *in his thoughts*, as to be conceived capable, when in fact they are not, of being *actually* combined in practice. The fallacious belief thus induced bears a striking resemblance to the optical illusion effected by that ingenious and philosophical toy called the ‘thaumatrope;’ in which two objects painted on opposite sides of a card,—for instance, a man and a horse, a bird and a cage,—are, by a quick rotatory motion, made so to impress the eye in combination, as to form one picture, of the man on the horse’s back,—the bird in the cage, &c. As soon as the card is allowed to remain at rest, the figures, of course, appear as they really are, separate and on opposite sides. A mental illusion closely analogous to this is produced, when, by a rapid and repeated transition from one subject to another, alternately, the mind is deluded into an idea of the actual combination of things that are really incompatible. The chief part of the defence which various writers have advanced in favour of the system of penal colonies, consists, in truth, of a sort of intellectual thaumatrope. The prosperity of the colony, and the repression of crime, are, by a sort of rapid whirl, presented to the mind as combined in one picture. A very moderate degree of calm and fixed attention

soon shows that the two objects are painted on *opposite sides* of the card.--(p. 334.)

On the risk run by superstitious persons of falling into grave error :—

Minds strongly predisposed to superstition, may be compared to heavy bodies just balanced on the verge of a precipice. The slightest touch will send them over ; and then, the greatest exertion that can be made may be insufficient to arrest their fall. —(p. 155.)

Illustration is sometimes the most cogent of argument. A volume of reasoning against ultra-conservatism would not equal, for general impression, the following plain statement of the case :—

Is there not, then, some reason for the ridicule which Bacon speaks of, as attaching to those ‘who too much reverence old times?’ To say that no changes shall take place is to talk idly. We might as well pretend to control the motions of the earth. To resolve that none shall take place *except* what are undesigned and accidental, is to resolve that though a clock may gain or lose indefinitely, at least we will take care that it shall never be regulated. ‘If time’ (to use Bacon’s warning words) ‘alters things to the worse, and wisdom and counsel shall not alter to the better, what shall be the end?’—(pp. 236-7.)

We shall throw together, without remark, some further examples of Archbishop Whately’s power of illustrating the moral by the physical. So marked a feature in his intellectual portraiture deserves, we think, extended notice. But it is only by studying the Annotations for themselves, that our readers can form any just idea of the affluence and exuberance of happy imagery with which they sparkle all over.

To these small wares, enumerated by Bacon, might be added a

very hackneyed trick, which yet is wonderfully successful—to affect a delicacy about mentioning particulars, and hint at what you *could* bring forward, only you do not wish to give offence. ‘We could give many cases to prove that such and such a medical system is all a delusion, and a piece of quackery; but we abstain, through tenderness for individuals, from bringing names before the Public.’ ‘I have observed many things—which, however, I will not particularise—which convince me that Mr. Such-a-one is unfit for his office; and others have made the same remark; but I do not like to bring them forward,’ &c. &c.

Thus an unarmed man keeps the unthinking in awe, by assuring them that he has a pair of loaded pistols in his pocket, though he is loth to produce them.—(p. 210.)

A man who plainly perceives that, as Bacon observes, there are some cases which call for promptitude, and others which require delay, and who has also sagacity enough to perceive *which* is which, will often be mortified at perceiving that he has come too late for some things, and too soon for others;—that he is like a skilful engineer, who perceives how he could, fifty years earlier, have effectually preserved an important harbour which is now irrecoverably silted up, and how he could, fifty years hence, though not at present, reclaim from the sea thousands of acres of fertile land at the delta of some river.—(p. 203.)

As in contemplating an ebbing tide, we are sometimes in doubt, on a short inspection, whether the sea is really receding, because, from time to time, a wave will dash further up the shore than those which have preceded it, but, if we continue our observations long enough, we see plainly that the boundary of the land is on the whole advancing; so here, by extending our view over many countries and through several ages, we may distinctly perceive the tendencies which would have escaped a more confined research.—(p. 300.)

An ancient Greek colony was like what gardeners call a *layer*; a portion of the parent tree, with stem, twigs, and leaves, imbedded in fresh soil till it had taken root, and then severed. A modern colony is like a handful of twigs and leaves pulled off at random, and thrown into the earth to take their chance.—(p. 341.)

‘*There be that can pack the cards, and yet cannot play well.*’

Those whom Bacon here so well describes, are men of a clear and quick sight, but short-sighted. They are ingenious in particulars, but cannot take a comprehensive view of a whole. Such a man may make a good captain, but a bad general. He may be clever at surprising a piquet, but would fail in the management of a great army and the conduct of a campaign. He is like a chess-player who takes several pawns, but is checkmated.—(p. 215.)

The truth is, that in all the *serious* and important affairs of life men are attached to what they have been used to ; in matters of *ornament* they covet novelty ; in all systems and institutions—in all the ordinary business of life—in all fundamentals—they cling to what is the established course ; in matters of detail—in what lies, as it were, on the surface—they seek variety. Man may, in reference to this point, be compared to a tree whose stem and main branches stand year after year, but whose leaves and flowers are fresh every season.—(p. 228.)

In no point is the record of past times more instructive to those capable of learning from other experience than their own, than in what relates to the history of *reactions*.

It has been often remarked by geographers that a river flowing through a level country of soft alluvial soil never keeps a straight course, but winds regularly to and fro, in the form of the letter S many times repeated. And a geographer, on looking at the course of any stream as marked on a map, can at once tell whether it flows along a plain (like the river *Meander*, which has given its name to such windings), or through a rocky and hilly country. It is found, indeed, that if a straight channel be cut for any stream in a plain consisting of tolerably soft soil, it will never long continue straight, unless artificially kept so, but becomes crooked, and increases its windings more and more every year. The cause is, that any little wearing away of the bank in the softest part of the soil, on one side, occasions a *set* of the stream against this hollow, which increases it, and at the same time drives the water aslant against the opposite bank a little lower down. This wears away that bank also ; and thus the stream is again driven against a part of the first bank, still lower ; and so on, till by the wearing away of the banks at these points on each

side, and the deposit of mud (gradually becoming dry land) in the comparatively still water between them, the course of the stream becomes sinuous, and its windings increase more and more.

And even thus, in human affairs, we find alternate movements, in nearly opposite directions, taking place from time to time, and generally bearing some proportion to each other in respect of the violence of each ; even as the highest flood-tide is succeeded by the lowest ebb.—(p. 154.)

Very beautifully, in the following paragraph, does the Archbishop illustrate the law that whatever is to last long, must grow slowly :—

We hear of volcanic islands thrown up in a few days to a formidable size, and in a few weeks or months, sinking down again or washed away ; while other islands, which are the summits of banks covered with weed and drift-sand, continue slowly increasing year after year, century after century. The man who is in a hurry to see the full effect of his own tillage, should cultivate annuals, not forest trees. The clear-headed lover of truth is content to wait for the result of his. If he is wrong in the doctrines he maintains, or the measures he proposes, at least it is not for the sake of immediate popularity. If he is right, it will be found out in time, though, perhaps, not in *his* time. The preparers of the *mummies* were (Herodotus says) driven *out of the house* by the family who had engaged their services, with execrations and stones ; but their work remains sound after three thousand years.—(p. 503.)

Although these extracts have been given mainly to exemplify Archbishop Whately's mode of enforcing and illustrating his views, they may have served likewise to give our readers some notion of the variety of topics treated in this volume, and of the Archbishop's opinions upon some of these. We hardly know how to attempt a description of the *matter* of the work, as distinguished from its *manner*. There are scores of

paragraphs among the Annotations which might each supply material for extended review; and we had marked many interesting passages with the intention of discussing at some length the views contained in them. But, even after weeding out of our list the topics which appeared of minor interest (the process was that of *thinning* rather than of weeding), so many remain, that we can do no more than glance at two or three.

In the second edition of the work, just published, we find no material differences when compared with the first. Archbishop Whately's opinions have been too well considered to admit of change within a few months' space. But the minute reader will find here and there many little additions, which afford pleasant proof that the author is still thinking upon the subjects treated; and which promise that, rich as this volume already is in wisdom and eloquence, it may yet be farther enriched by the farther observation and reflection of its writer. In the former edition the Essay 'On Faction' was followed by no remarks: in the present edition it is followed by several annotations—some of them suggested, we may believe, by recent occurrences in America. The following passage, of special interest at the present time, points out forcibly the advantage of having in a State *aliquid impercussum*—a central rallying-point detached from all party, and to which all parties may profess attachment:—

Bacon's remark, that a Prince ought not to make it his policy to 'govern *according to respect to factions*,' suggests a strong ground of preference of *hereditary* to elective sovereignty. For when a chief—whether called king, emperor, president, or by whatever name—is *elected* (whether for life, or for a term of

years), he can hardly avoid being the head of a party. He who is elected will be likely to feel aversion towards those who have voted against him; who may be, perhaps, nearly half of his subjects. And they again will be likely to regard him as an *enemy*, instead of feeling loyalty to him as their prince.

And those again who have voted *for* him, will consider him as being under an *obligation* to them, and expect him to show to them more favour than to the rest of his subjects; so that he will be rather the head of a party than the king of a people.

Then, too, when the throne is likely to become vacant—that is, when the king is old, or is attacked with any serious illness—what secret canvassing and disturbance of men's minds will take place! The king himself will most likely wish that his son, or some other near relative or friend, should succeed him, and he will employ all his patronage with a view to such an election; appointing to public offices not the fittest men, but those whom he can reckon on as voters. And others will be exerting themselves to form a party against him; so that the country will be hardly ever tranquil, and very seldom well-governed.

If, indeed, men were very different from what they are, there might be superior advantages in an elective royalty; but in the actual state of things, the disadvantages will in general greatly outweigh the benefits.

Accordingly most nations have seen the advantage of hereditary royalty, notwithstanding the defects of such a constitution.

We heartily wish that all parents would remember and act upon the Archbishop's view, as expressed in the following passage. We believe the caution is extensively needed. We believe that many injudicious parents (with the best intention) trench upon the incommunicable prerogative of the All-wise and the Almighty, by needlessly causing griefs and disappointments to their children, under the idea that all this forms a wholesome discipline. They forget that the nature and effect of every event partaking of the

character of *pain*, is determined by the source it comes from. When the heaviest sorrow comes by God's appointment, we bow in submission; and this not merely because we cannot help it,—because it is vain to repine—because God *will* take His own way, whether we like it or not,—but because we have perfect confidence in the rightness of whatever God may do, and because we feel assured that there must be good reason for all He does, although we may not be able to discern that reason. As regards *man*, we have no such confidence. And parents may be assured that their foolish conduct towards their children in many cases *is* a training, but an extremely bad one; it trains the children to a spirit of fruitless and therefore bitter resistance, and of dogged resentment. The philanthropist Howard, by taking the course the Archbishop reprobates, drove his son into a lunatic asylum. *He* followed that course rigorously and universally, and so the worst degree of mental disease ensued upon it. Most parents follow it only in part; and the lesser evil follows, of alienated affection, loss of confidence, jaundiced views, and a soured heart. Yet if any parent, on a cold morning, insists on his children remaining in that part of the room most distant from the fire, when their warming their little blue hands *there* could do no harm to any human being; or systematically refuses to permit them to go to 'children's parties,' not because they are asked to too many, but merely because it is good for them to be disappointed; or, generally, seeks to repress the exhibition of gaiety and light-heartedness, because 'we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of

God ;' then let that parent be assured, that surely as the field sown with tares yielded a harvest of tares, so surely will this petty tyranny bring forth its natural result, of resentment and aversion.

Most carefully should we avoid the error of which some parents, not (otherwise) deficient in good sense, commit, of imposing gratuitous restrictions and privations, and purposely inflicting needless disappointments, for the purpose of inuring children to the pains and troubles they will meet with in after-life. Yes, be assured they *will* meet with quite *enough*, in every portion of life, including childhood, without your strewing their path with thorns of your own providing. And often enough will you have to limit their amusements for the sake of needful study, to restrain their appetites for the sake of health, to chastise them for faults, and in various ways to inflict pain or privations for the sake of avoiding some greater evils. Let this always be explained to them whenever it is possible to do so ; and endeavour in all cases to make them look on the parent as never the *voluntary* giver of anything but good. To any hardships which they are convinced you inflict reluctantly, and to those which occur through the dispensation of the All-wise, they will more easily be trained to submit with a good grace, than to any gratuitous sufferings devised for them by fallible men. To raise hopes on purpose to produce disappointment, to give provocation merely to exercise the temper, and, in short, to inflict pain of any kind merely as a training for patience and fortitude—this is a kind of discipline which man should not presume to attempt. If such trials prove a discipline not so much of cheerful fortitude as of resentful aversion and suspicious distrust of the parent as a capricious tyrant, you will have only yourself to thank for this result.—(pp. 58-9.)

Archbishop Whately is of opinion that the fear of punishment in a future life is a motive of more permanent force than that of temporal judgments. We quote his words :—

It is true that some men, who are nearly strangers to such

a habit, may be for a time more alarmed by the denunciation of immediate temporal judgments for their sins, than by any considerations relative to 'the things which are not seen and which are eternal.' But the effect thus produced is much less likely to be lasting, or while it lasts to be salutary, because temporal alarm does not tend to make men spiritually-minded, and any reformation of manners it may have produced will not have been founded on Christian principles.—(pp. 61-2.)

Upon this we remark that there can be no question that, were future punishments realised as substantially as temporal evils, they ought to have, and would have, a much greater effect in deterring from sinful conduct. But the great difficulty with which men have to contend is the essential impossibility of realising spiritual and unseen things in their true bulk and importance; of feeling that a thing in the Bible, or in a sermon, is as *real* a thing as something in the daylight, material world. In no case is this difficulty more felt than in regard to future punishments in another life. We may be far mistaken: but the result of considerable experience of the ways and feelings of a rustic population, is something of doubt whether in practice the fear of future punishment produces any effect in deterring from evil courses. A mountain, far away, may be concealed by a shilling held close to the eye; and future woe seems to crass minds so distant and so misty, that a very small immediate gratification quite hides it from view.

We remember, as illustrative of this, a circumstance related by a neighbouring clergyman. His parishioners were sadly addicted to drinking to excess. Men and women were alike given to this degrading vice. He did, of course, all he could to repress it, but all in vain.

For many years, he said, he warned the drunkards in the most solemn manner of the doom they might expect in another world ; but, so far as he knew, not a pot of ale or glass of spirits the less was drunk in the parish in consequence of his denunciations. Future woe melted into mist in the presence of a replenished jug on a market-day. A happy thought struck the clergyman. In the neighbouring town there was a clever medical man, a vehement teetotaler. Him he summoned to his aid. The doctor came, and delivered a lecture on the *physical* consequences of drunkenness, illustrating his lecture with large diagrams which gave shocking representations of the stomach, lungs, heart, and other vital organs, as affected by alcohol. These things came home to the drunkards, who had not cared a rush for final perdition. The effect produced was tremendous. Almost all the men and women of the parish took the total-abstinence pledge; and since that day, drunkenness has nearly ceased in that parish. Nor was the improvement evanescent ; it has lasted for two or three years.

The Archbishop, in the Annotations upon ‘Simulation and Dissimulation,’ discusses the question whether an author is justified in disowning the authorship of his anonymous productions. It is, indeed, a considerable annoyance when meddling and impertinent persons, in spite of every indication that the subject is a disagreeable one, persist in trying by *fishing questions* to discover whether we know who wrote such an article in *Fraser’s Magazine* or the *Edinburgh Review* ; and though no man of good sense or taste will do this, no author is

safe in the existing abundance of men who are devoid of both these qualities. We have known instances in which the subject was recurred to time after time by impertinent questioners; and in which, by sudden enquiries put in the presence of many listeners, and by interrogating the relatives and intimate friends of the supposed writer, attempts were made to elicit the fact.

It is curious to remark the various opinions which have been put on record as to the casuistry of such cases. There is but one opinion as to the extreme impertinence of the questioners: and so far as *they* are concerned, the curtest refusal to answer their enquiries would be the fittest way of meeting them. But, unhappily, a refusal to reply will in many cases be regarded as an answer in the affirmative: and if the only alternatives were a *correct answer* and *no answer*, any meddling fool might reveal a literary secret of the highest importance. Dr. Johnson took up the ground that an author is justified in directly denying that he wrote his anonymous writings. Sir Walter Scott expressly declared that he was not the author of the *Waverley Novels*. Mr. Samuel Warren, when a lad at school, with characteristic presumption wrote to Sir Walter as such; and Sir Walter's answer, published in Mr. Warren's *Miscellanies*, expressly repudiates the authorship. Mr. Samuel Rogers drew a nice distinction. Some forward individual, in his presence, taxed Scott with the authorship of *Waverley*; Sir Walter replied, 'Upon my honour, I am not:' and Rogers thought that Scott might fairly have replied in the negative, but that he ought not to have said 'Upon

my honour.' Swift's reply to Serjeant Bettesworth approached a shade nearer the fact:—

Mr. Bettesworth, I was in my youth acquainted with great lawyers, who, knowing my disposition to satire, advised me, that if any scoundrel or blockhead whom I had lampooned should ask, 'Are you the author of this paper?' I should tell him that I was not the author: and THEREFORE I tell you, Mr. Bettesworth, that I am not the author of these lines.

A writer in a recent *Quarterly Review** appears to be for exact truth at all risks; saying that the question really is, whether impertinence in one person will justify falsehood in another? and maintaining that, if the least departure from veracity is admitted in any instance, there is no saying where the thing will end.

Archbishop Whately is reluctant to advise a departure from truth in any case, but advises a method of meeting prying questioners which we trust reviewers will make use of on occasion. We quote the passage in which his advice occurs; it is admirable for point and pungency:—

A well-known author once received a letter from a peer with whom he was slightly acquainted, asking him whether he was the author of a certain article in the *Edinburgh Review*. He replied that he never made communications of that kind, except to intimate friends, selected by himself for the purpose, when he saw fit. His refusal to answer, however, pointed him out—which, as it happened, he did not care for—as the author. But a case might occur, in which the revelation of the authorship might involve a friend in some serious difficulties. In any such case, he might have answered something in this style: 'I have received a letter purporting to be from your lordship, but

* *Quarterly Review*, vol. xcix. p. 302.

the matter of it induces me to suspect that it is a forgery by some mischievous trickster. The writer asks whether I am the author of a certain article. It is a sort of question which no one has a right to ask; and I think, therefore, that everyone is bound to discourage such enquiries by answering them—whether one is or is not the author—with a rebuke for asking impertinent questions about private matters. I say “private,” because, if an article be libellous or seditious, the law is open, and anyone may proceed against the publisher, and compel him either to give up the author, or to bear the penalty. If, again, it contains false statements, these, coming from an anonymous pen, may be simply contradicted. And if the arguments be unsound, the obvious course is to refute them. But *who* wrote it, is a question of idle or of mischievous curiosity, as it relates to the private concerns of an individual.

‘If I were to ask your lordship, “Do you spend your income? or lay by? or outrun? Do you and your lady ever have an altercation? Was she your first love? or were you attached to some one else before?” If I were to ask such questions, your lordship’s answer would probably be, to desire the footman to show me out. Now, the present enquiry I regard as no less unjustifiable, and relating to private concerns: and, therefore, I think everyone bound, when so questioned, always, whether he is the author or not, to meet the enquiry with a rebuke.

‘Hoping that my conjecture is right, of the letter’s being a forgery, I remain,’ &c.

In any case, however, in which a refusal to answer does not convey any information, the best way, perhaps, of meeting impertinent enquiries, is by saying, ‘Can you keep a secret?’ and when the other answers that he can, you may reply, ‘Well, so can I.’—(pp. 68-9.)

There are some admirable remarks, under the head of the Essay on ‘Parents and Children,’ upon the propriety of considering in what direction a boy’s talents lie, in making choice of a profession for him. Too frequently, when we speak of a boy’s mind having a

bent to some particular course, it is understood that what is meant is, that he has an extraordinary genius for it. But it is to be remembered that

numbers of men who would never attain any extraordinary eminence in anything, are yet so constituted as to make a very respectable figure in the department that is suited for them, and to fall below mediocrity in a different one.—(pp. 72-3.)

Mr. Thackeray would be delighted with the short Annotations on the Essay 'Of Nobility.' It is in the nature of the Anglo-Saxon race to worship rank; and when (as in the United States) rank is altogether ignored, the very violence of the reaction from the way in which things are done on this side of the Atlantic, indicates how resolute is the bent of the species in the contrary direction. It is the man who has a strong disposition to fall down at the feet of a duke, that is most likely to deny a duke, because he is one, the courtesy due to a man. We think that Archbishop Whately holds the balance very fairly between the two extremes:—

In reference to nobility in individuals, nothing was ever better said than by Bishop Warburton—as is reported—in the House of Lords, on the occasion of some angry dispute which had arisen between a peer of noble family and one of a new creation. He said that, 'high birth was a thing which he never knew anyone disparage, except those who had it not; and he never knew anyone make a boast of it who had anything else to be proud of.'

It was a remark by a celebrated man, himself a gentleman born, but with nothing of nobility, that the difference between a man with a long line of noble ancestors, and an upstart, is that 'the one knows for certain, what the other only conjectures at

highly probable, that several of his forefathers deserved hanging.'
—(pp. 121-2.)

In the Annotations on the Essay 'Of Friendship,' the Archbishop puts down, by irresistible force of argument, one of the most silly, mischievous, purposeless, and groundless errors which have ever been taught: we mean the doctrine that in a future life, happy souls will be no longer capable of special individual friendship. We have often been filled with burning indignation at finding in the book of some empty-headed divine who never learned logic, or in the sermon of some popular preacher thoroughly devoid of sense, taste, scholarship, modesty, and the reasoning faculty, lengthy tirades about the perfection of another world consisting much in an entire elevation above such earthly things as specific attachments. We have seen and heard it stated that in a future life, blessed spirits will never remember or recognise those who were dearest to them in this: and perhaps, indeed, will not remember or recognise their own identity. It is satisfactory to know that this doctrine is as groundless as it is revolting: and most truly does Archbishop Whately say, that

this is one of the many points in which views of the eternal state of the heirs of salvation are rendered more uninteresting to our feelings, and consequently, more uninviting, than there is any need to make them.

There is much social wisdom in the remarks upon the Essay 'Of Expense.' And here the Archbishop, in a graver tone, propounds a like philosophy to that which Mr. Thackeray has in several of his writings

enforced so well. It would be hard to reckon up the misery and anxiety which are produced in this country by absurd and foolish straining to 'keep up appearances : ' that is, with five hundred a year to entertain precisely like a man with five thousand, and generally to present a false face to the world, and seem other than what one is. When will this curse of our civilised life cease? Surely, if people knew how transparent are all the pretences by which they think to pass for wealthy folk—how readily neighbours see through them—how incomparably more respectable and more respected is sterling yet unaffected honesty in this matter—this foolish display would cease, and the analogous forms of deception would cease with it. No one is taken in by them. Anyone who knows the world knows thoroughly how, by an accompanying process of mental arithmetic, to make the deductions from the big talk or the pretentious show of some people, which are needed to bring the appearance down to the reality. The greengrocer got in for the day is never mistaken for the family butler. The fly jobbed by the hour is easily distinguished from the brougham which it personates. And when Mr. Smith or Mrs. Jones talks largely of his or her aristocratic acquaintances, mentioning no name without 'a handle to it,' no one is for a moment misled into the belief that of such is the circle of society in which Mrs. Jones or Mr. Smith moves.

In the Annotations on the 'Regimen of Health,' there are some useful remarks upon early and late hours, and upon times of study, which we commend

to the notice of hard-working college-men. And these remarks close with the following suggestive paragraph :—

Of persons who have led a temperate life, those will have the best chance of longevity who have done hardly anything but live ; what may be called the *neuter verbs*—not active or passive, but only *being* : who have had but little to do, little to suffer ; but have led a life of quiet retirement, without exertion of body or mind,—avoiding all troublesome enterprise, and seeking only a comfortable obscurity. Such men, if of a pretty strong constitution, and if they escape any remarkable calamities, are likely to live long. But much affliction, or much exertion, and, still more, both combined, will be sure to *tell* upon the constitution—if not at once, yet at least as years advance. One who is of the character of an active or passive verb, or, still more, both combined, though he may be said to have lived long in everything but years, will rarely reach the age of the neuters.—(p. 305.)

‘It is better,’ said Bishop Cumberland, ‘to wear out than to rust out :’ yet there can be no question that when the energies of body and mind are husbanded, they will go farther and last longer. Never to light the candle is the way to make it last for ever. Yet it may suffice the man who has crowded much living into a short life, to think that he has ‘lived long in everything but years.’

We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives,
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.*

* Bailey's *Festus*.

In remarking on the Essay 'Of Suspicion,' the Archbishop writes as follows :—

'Multitudes are haunted by the spectres, as it were, of vague surmises and indefinite suspicions, which continue thus to haunt them, just because they are vague and indefinite,—because the mind has never ventured to look them boldly in the face, and put them into a shape in which reason can examine them.'—
(p. 317.)

A valuable practical lesson is to be drawn from the principle here laid down. Only experience can convince a man how wonderfully the mind's burden is lightened, by merely getting a clear view of what it has to do, or bear, or encounter. Some persons go through life in a ceaseless worry, oppressed and confused by an undefined feeling that they have a vast number and variety of things to do, and never feeling at rest or easy in their minds. If any man would just take a piece of paper and note down upon it what work he has to do, he will be surprised to find how much less formidable it will look ; not that it will necessarily look little, but that the killing thing—the vague sense of undefined magnitude, will be gone. So it is with troubles—so with doubts. If anyone who is possessed with the general impression that he is an extremely ill-used and unhappy man, would write down the special items of his troubles—even though the list should be of considerable length, he will find that matters are not so bad after all. There is nothing, we believe, that so aggravates all evil to the minds of most men, as when the sense of the vague, indeterminate, and innumerable, is added to it. And we are strong believers in the

power of *the pen* to give most people clear and well-defined thoughts.

We may particularise as especially worthy of attention, Archbishop Whately's observations on the different periods of life at which different men attain their mental maturity (pp. 403-4); on the license of counsel in pleading a client's cause (pp. 509-12); on the necessity of the forms and ceremonies of etiquette, even among the closest friends (p. 479); and upon the causes of sudden popularity (pp. 500-2). Students will find some valuable advice at pp. 460-1; and young preachers at pp. 323-4. Those persons who pretend an entire contempt for worldly wealth, either because the grapes hang beyond their reach, or from envy of people who are more fortunate, may turn with advantage to pp. 350-1. Those amiable individuals who are wont to express their satisfaction that such an acquaintance has met with some disappointment, *because it will do him good*, are referred to the Archbishop's keen and just remark upon such as bestow posthumous praise upon a man whom they reviled and calumniated during his life, and may profitably consider whether the real motive from which they speak is not highly analogous:—

It may fairly be suspected that the one circumstance respecting him which they secretly dwell on with the most satisfaction, though they do not mention it, is that he is *dead*; and that they delight in bestowing their posthumous honours on him, chiefly because they are *posthumous*; according to the concluding couplet in the 'Verses on the Death of Dean Swift':—

'And since you dread *no further lashes*,
Methinks you may forgive his ashes.'—(p. 19.)

We must draw our remarks to a close. We feel how imperfect an idea we have given of Archbishop Whately's Annotations,—of their range, their cogency, their wisdom, their experience, their practical instruction, their wit, their eloquence. The extracts we have quoted are like a sheaf of wheat brought from a field of a hundred acres; but we trust our readers may be induced to study the book for themselves.

II.

RECENT METAPHYSICAL WORKS—LEWES, MAURICE,
FLEMING.*

WE do not think, judging from the contempt in which Mr. Lewes holds the Scotch philosophical school, that he would concur in the common opinion that the Scotch are a metaphysical race. But we believe that Mr. Lewes would admit that a certain Scotch blacksmith, mentioned in Dr. Fleming's book, succeeded in expressing in a pithy sentence the opinion as to metaphysical science which is accepted by the mass of mankind :—

‘Twa folk,’ said he, ‘disputin’ thegither ; he that’s listenin’ doesna ken what he that’s speakin’ means ; and he that’s speakin’ doesna ken what he means himsel’,—that’s metaphysics.’

* *The Biographical History of Philosophy, from its Origin in Greece down to the Present Day.* By George Henry Lewes. London : 1857.

Encyclopædia Metropolitana : Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy. Part I. Ancient Philosophy : Part II. Philosophy of the First Six Centuries : Part III. Mediæval Philosophy. By Frederick Denison Maurice, M.A. London and Glasgow : 1854—1857.

The Vocabulary of Philosophy ; Mental, Moral, and Metaphysical : with Quotations and References, for the use of Students. By William Fleming, D.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. London and Glasgow : 1857.

The popular impression of metaphysics is of something excessively uninteresting ; utterly away from all bearing on practical life, and for the most part quite unintelligible. The unintelligibility, so far as it exists, is mainly the fault of the authors who have written upon metaphysical subjects : the want of interest and of practical concern is chargeable, we fear, upon the branch of science itself. Very acute, very profound, and very subtle thought is of course more difficult to follow, than it is to take in and apprehend such a proposition as that the day is rainy, or that two and two make four ; and it is natural enough for ignorant persons to consider the difficulty of apprehending any thought as the measure of its subtlety, profundity, or acuteness ; and to think that the harder they find it to understand what an author would be at, the greater philosopher that author must be. It is but carrying out this notion to its legitimate conclusion, when many people judge, that if they find it utterly impossible to understand an author, it must be because he possesses powers greatly superior to those bestowed upon one whom they understand throughout, or by occasional glimpses. But we believe that in almost every instance in which men and women of ordinary intelligence and education find it difficult to make out an author's meaning, the fault lies entirely with the author himself. Either he himself has no clear notion of what he wishes to say, or he wants the power of saying it in intelligible words. In the case of metaphysical writings, we find many proofs that both these evils exist. Many metaphysical writers, it is evident, are groping their way through their subject as they

proceed: they have no defined notion in their mind: they do not know what they want to express, and it is not at all surprising that they do not succeed in expressing it. An author will generally present his thoughts to other minds, somewhat less sharply outlined than they exist in his own mind. And as if the essential difficulty of apprehending the impalpable and evanescent entities with which the metaphysician deals were not sufficient, many metaphysicians have employed a terminology so odd, affected, and unnatural, and a general style so intricate and involved, that it is not to be wondered at if the great majority of readers throw aside their works in disgust. There has been of late years a healthy reaction from that blind admiration which for a time followed the intellectual ‘children of the mist.’ The Archbishop of Dublin, in the preface to his recent edition of Bacon’s *Essays*, has remarked with his usual force and felicity upon the utterly undeserved influence which German theology and metaphysics for a considerable period exercised, and in some measure do still exercise, over many in this country;—an influence founded mainly upon the belief that whatever is abstruse and recondite must be abstruse and recondite wisdom. It is not too much to say, that if many of the young persons who regard German thinking as much more profound than English, understood the true meaning (so far as there is any) of what they admire, they would discover that it consists partly of what is undoubtedly true but perfectly trivial; and in greater part of what is flagrantly and absurdly false.

‘It is pity,’ we sometimes hear it said, ‘that such and such an author does not express in simple, intelligible, unaffected English such admirable matter as his.’ They little think that it is the strangeness and obscurity of the style that make the power displayed seem far greater than it is; and that much of what they now admire as originality and profound wisdom, would appear, if translated into common language, mere commonplace matter. Many a work of this description may remind one of the supposed ancient shield which had been found by the antiquary Martinus Scriblerus, and which he highly prized, encrusted as it was with venerable rust. He mused on the splendid appearance it must have had in its bright newness; till, one day, an over-sedulous house-maid having scoured off the rust, it turned out to be merely an old pot-lid.*

We heartily wish that the Archbishop’s words were impressed on the mind of every clever young undergraduate of every university in Britain. If a man writing English in England writes so as to be generally unintelligible, the simple inference in most cases should be, that he has not the command of his mother-tongue. And we think that such an instance as that of Archbishop Whately himself, who habitually treats the most recondite subjects with a crystalline clearness which makes the difficulty of following him, when it is difficult, that which arises from the severity of the thinking alone, must have tended powerfully to prove that there is no necessary connection between profundity of thought and unintelligibility of language. The last retreat of the theory that such a connection is essential, we believe to be among the bumpkins of many remote country parishes. *They* judge, that as a depth of the ocean is a point where the plummet finds no ground, so a deep

* Archbishop Whately’s *Bacon*, pp. viii–ix.

sermon is one whose meaning they find it impossible to fathom.

But apart from any obscurity in the style of a metaphysical writer, there is something in the essential nature of the subjects which he has to treat, that will always make them seem misty, vague, and unreal to the minds of most men. Nor would this difficulty be removed, even if the soundest sense and the strongest truth had always filled those philosophic pages which we know too well have been more frequently deformed by every kind of trifling, absurdity, and falsehood. Except as a mental discipline, we cannot conceive anything more thoroughly unprofitable than the attempt to become acquainted with the systems which those men to whom the name of philosopher has been accorded, have taught. A history of philosophic opinion is a history of the vilest rubbish, the most childish nonsense, that ever proceeded from the mind of man. The common sense of mankind has consigned the greater part of it to contempt or oblivion. Whoever reads Mr. Lewes's careful account of much of the Greek philosophy, will probably hold, with Sydney Smith, that in those days common sense was not yet invented. But although it were otherwise, a science which treats of things which the eye cannot see nor the fingers grasp, must ever seem to the common mind to be engaged with things which have but a ghostly and unsubstantial existence. Even the strongest religious faith has to bewail that it falls so very far short of sight. Reality, in the impression of most men, is truly a quality of matter. Metaphysics, in its finest development, results

to actual sense in the appearance of a thoughtful and careworn man, who is, physically, probably far below the average of his fellows ; or in a book, full indeed of sharp and profound processes and results of thought, and setting forth much that is elevating and noble. But to sight that is all. It ends there. To the sense of any man the result is small ; nor does it probably appear great to the appreciation of more than one man in a hundred thousand. But in the case of physical science we have all the acute thought, the bold generalisation, the happy inference : and then the locomotive steam-engine or the Menai-bridge as the visible and tangible result. And the locomotive steam-engine or the Menai-bridge is what every man can touch and see. What wonder, then, if, in a practical age, men should say, ‘ Give us the facts and realities of science, not the dreams of metaphysics ? That is the true philosophy which carries us sixty miles in the hour—which places on our breakfast table the letter written, since the sun went down, five hundred miles off—which provides warm and cheerful houses to live in—and which, as Bacon would have said, *commodis humanis inservit*.’

We have before us three recent works upon the entire field of metaphysics, each with a strongly-marked individuality of its own.

Mr. Lewes’s book, although only a new edition of a former publication, is so much altered and extended as to be virtually a new work. Although it bears the title of a *Biographical History of Philosophy*, it combines, in tolerably equal amount, biography, exposition, and criticism. We have the lives, not by any means of all

eminent philosophers, but of a representative man of each school. Then we have a view of the peculiar tenets of each school, given for the most part with scrupulous fairness, and not stated at second-hand, but derived by Mr. Lewes himself from the writings of the most eminent authors of each. But Mr. Lewes has not set himself to exhibit a full system of the opinions taught by each philosopher or each school. Adopting heartily the view expressed in the lines of Tennyson, which he has taken as a motto :—

For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose
runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the
suns,—

he has rather sought to show how thought and opinion were developed from age to age, each new thinker taking a further step, though not always a step in advance. He has confined himself mainly to that in each philosopher which was his peculiar contribution to the great sum of human thought and conclusion, and tried to show that philosophy ran a regular course, each new view being a development of, or a consequence from, or a reaction from, that which went before. A distinctive characteristic of Mr. Lewes's work is, that it is written to prove that philosophy, properly so called, is impossible. It is a curious thing to find a history of metaphysics laboriously produced by an author who avows his belief in the utter futility of metaphysics, and who denies even the superior grandeur of the speculations through which that misty science leads. Most

men, whether speaking or writing, are wont to begin a discussion of any subject by maintaining its vast importance and utility : Mr. Lewes writes his book to show that his subject is of no importance or utility at all. Any interest which philosophy may still retain, he holds to be purely historical. It is still interesting for us, standing amid the certainties of science, to look back upon the past wanderings and struggles of the human mind and the human race. But *now* we have got out of the wood ; we have climbed the hill. Philosophy has abdicated in favour of physical science ; the only philosophy which survives is Positivism ; which merely notes phenomena, and believes nothing but what it sees. The steps of the course in which Mr. Lewes holds that human reason has advanced, retrograded, and deviated, till it ended in this, we shall hereafter consider ; and of the grounds on which his ultimate principle rests we have something to say. Meanwhile we quote Mr. Lewes's own words :—

The purport of this history is to show how and why the interest in philosophy has become purely historical. In this purport lies the principal novelty of the work. There is no other history of philosophy written by one disbelieving in the possibility of metaphysical certitude.

Mr. Lewes holds that there is no certainty in metaphysics ; that philosophy's day is over ; that it served a great end in raising mankind from ignorance and apathy, and awakening the thirst for knowledge ; and that now it is needed no more. We have got beyond it. It belongs to the discipline of an earlier

period in the progress of the race. It is now the day of physics.

If our history (says Mr. Lewes) has any value, it is in the emphatic sanction which it gives to the growing neglect of philosophy, the growing preference for science.

Such is the great principle which Mr. Lewes maintains in his book; and he maintains it with great ingenuity and force; and brings to its support very extensive stores of information. If his book be a heavy one, the fault is not the author's, but the subject's. Lively illustration, and picturesque narrative and description, have done their utmost to enliven the work. And there is something quite refreshing in the clearness of Mr. Lewes's conceptions and the transparency of his style. One may differ from the opinion which he expresses; but one is never in difficulty to know what he means. We cannot pretend to be able to judge throughout; but in so far as we can judge, the treatment of the subject is laboriously conscientious. There is a floating tradition of stock impressions of the peculiar tenets of most eminent philosophers; and these are in many cases very inaccurate and inexact. But Mr. Lewes has not been content merely to repeat the old story as to what Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hobbes, Leibnitz, or Spinoza thought. He has studied the works of the great metaphysicians for himself; and where his statements of their doctrines are not thus made expressly at first hand, he has not been content to receive the traditional impression without at least verifying it by reference to the original. Anyone who has ever been conversant with

metaphysical study, cannot fail to regard with respect a book to whose composition so great an amount of hard work must have gone. Some indication of this is given incidentally in a note upon the section devoted to the method of Plato. Mr. Lewes mentions in it that previously to writing that section, he renewed his acquaintance with Plato by carefully reading *all his works*, with the exception of two of the minor ones. We feel that a book which at each successive step is founded upon information so extensive and accurate, is not one for hasty and flippant criticism. And while we thank Mr. Lewes sincerely for restoring to definiteness much knowledge which was growing misty in our memory; and while we appreciate highly his acuteness of logic, and his subtlety of thought, as well as his lively and attractive style; we shall seek to combat the great principle on which he finally rests; and to show that it either leads to consequences the most melancholy, or virtually coincides with the leading doctrine of a school which Mr. Lewes holds, we cannot but think, in most undeserved depreciation.

Mr. Maurice's volumes form part of the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*. Like Mr. Lewes, he has aimed at producing a historical rather than a didactic work; and like Mr. Lewes, he has written rather for popular perusal than for the study of the learned. He says in his general preface:—

Leaving the student to seek for a formal and regular account of systems in the many French or German works which profess to furnish one, I have contented myself with offering him a few hints which might help him in examining the purpose of the

most conspicuous teachers; in reading their books, when they had left any; in connecting them with the country or the age wherein they flourished. . . . My remarks could not be a substitute for the reflections of the reader, or for an examination of the original sources; they might lead, I hoped, to both.

Mr. Maurice's work remains as yet incomplete. Although three volumes of it have appeared, not indeed large volumes, but printed in a type so small as to have a deterring effect upon any but young and unworn eyes, he has got no further down than the end of the thirteenth century. Differing essentially, as we shall see, from Mr. Lewes in the great principle on which his work is founded, Mr. Maurice has likewise adopted a plan of treating his subject which varies materially from the plan of Mr. Lewes in many points of detail. Thus Mr. Maurice's first volume, which is given to Ancient Philosophy, contains some account of the philosophy of the Hebrews, Egyptians, Hindoos, Chinese, and Persians: Mr. Lewes, for reasons too long to state, has omitted from his book any description of the metaphysics of the East. Mr. Maurice, in the same volume, gives a brief account of the philosophy of Rome; while Mr. Lewes, holding that Rome never had a philosophy of its own, having added no new idea to those which it borrowed from Greece, holds that Rome is entitled to no mention in a work intended to exhibit the development of philosophical thought. Mr. Maurice traces ancient philosophy through its Oriental, Grecian, Roman, and Alexandrian development: Mr. Lewes holds that all ancient philosophy, properly so called, was confined to Greece; and that when phi-

losophy appeared in the Alexandrian schools, it was no longer philosophy pure, but philosophy adulterated with religion or faith. From Alexandria, the end of the ancient philosophy, Mr. Lewes goes by one great step to Bacon, the founder of the modern ; holding the long interval from Proclus to Bacon as a mere period of transition, to which he has given attention enough when he has placed in it, as stepping-stones, the names of Abelard, Algazzali, and Giordano Bruno. Mr. Maurice, on the other hand, has devoted the second and third volumes of his work to the period over which Mr. Lewes passes so lightly ; the second volume treating of the philosophy of the first six centuries, and the third, of the philosophy of the time from the fifth century to the fourteenth. Mr. Maurice is therefore still fighting his way through the teachings of the middle ages : Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and the Franciscans, being the latest philosophers of whom he has treated.

The essential antagonism of the principles on which Mr. Maurice and Mr. Lewes have written their respective works, may account in a considerable degree for the modes of treatment which they have respectively adopted. Mr. Lewes's great principle is, that philosophy is useless ; that it has not, nor ever had, any life in it : and he expounds and criticises the views of each successive representative writer or teacher, to show how futile and useless they were ; till at length, in the positivism of Auguste Comte, he sees with approval, philosophy finally yielding the field to physical science. Mr. Maurice, on the contrary, holds that all

men in all ages have had a divine teacher, whether they have followed his guiding or not ; and so, by implication, that amid all its wanderings and follies, there has ever been in philosophy a certain measure of divine truth. In a different sense of the phrase, Mr. Maurice would sympathise with Mr. Morell, who avows himself a believer in philosophy. And it is easy to understand how, to a man of so earnest and sincere a spirit as Mr. Maurice, such a reflection must throw a solemnity and sanctity about the wildest fancies of the metaphysician, groping, under unconscious and half-regarded guidance, after eternal truth. Holding the principle which he holds, Mr. Maurice cannot think it wasted time that is given even to the tracing of the views of semi-barbarous lands, or the aimless subtleties of mediæval thinkers. He may see in them much to wonder at, much to disapprove, but assuredly nothing to laugh at. And we can well understand how carefully Mr. Maurice will shrink from the farthest risk of in any degree misrepresenting what men, earnestly seeking truth, and seeking it under such guidance as that in which he believes, have at any time been able to attain to.

Mr. Maurice occupies a position which is so well understood by those to whom his influence extends, and his characteristics, both of thought and language, are so marked, that it is almost presumptuous to express any opinion of him which in any degree differs from the received impression. His intense honesty and guileless sincerity of purpose give a charm to all he does ; nor is his influence over young men, over

whom it is very great, likely to be lessened by what appear to us the facts, that he is occasionally earnest to a degree in which earnestness passes into impracticability: that as a guide he is sometimes not a little unsafe; and that oftentimes his style is such as to tantalise us with the expectation of something which does not come to us in such a shape that we can grasp and hold it. We think—it is but our opinion—that Mr. Maurice, in all his writings, is sometimes struggling to express views which are present to his own mind in a very undefined form. Still, no one can open these volumes, at almost any page, without happening upon passages full of a quiet and thoughtful beauty which is peculiarly Mr. Maurice's own; and whoever shall carefully peruse the work so far as it has gone, will certainly rise from the reading of it with no ordinary feeling of affection towards his guide.

We do not know whether it proceeds from a prejudice of early training; but we confess that from Mr. Maurice, and even from Mr. Lewes, we turn with a feeling of refreshment to Dr. Fleming's book. Scotch philosophy may not be subtle; but it is always intelligible. Some would probably deny that it is entitled to be called philosophy at all; but it is at least sound, homely sense, about important subjects, expressed in clear and comprehensible language. De Quincey has expressed his opinion, that of all writers with whom he is or was acquainted, English poets possess the most of the analytic faculty, and Scotch professors the least: but one thing may at all events be said to the praise of

most Scotch professors of philosophy; namely, that if one of them states to us what are his opinions upon any point whatever, any person of ordinary intelligence will always know exactly what the professor means.

Dr. Fleming is the eloquent and accomplished Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. He has filled his chair for more than twenty years; but as he has confined his energies entirely to the assiduous discharge of his academic duties, he is by no means so widely known as his attainments and genius entitle him to be. A Scotch professor of philosophy is expected to read the same course of lectures session after session; so that when his course of lectures has been completed, he may enjoy comparative leisure. But to compose a course of about a hundred and twenty lectures, each occupying an hour in the reading, and together forming an elaborate system of metaphysics, ethics, and natural theology, is a task demanding not only very great information and great industry, but very considerable time. The session at Glasgow College lasts from the first of November to the first of May; and during these six months, Dr. Fleming lectures six days a week. His lectures having been fully composed, he has for some years had leisure for literary work during the long summer vacation of six months; and he has lately given to the world his first considerable work, in the form of a *Vocabulary of Philosophy; Mental, Moral, and Metaphysical*. We might have expected from Dr. Fleming a more ambitious work; but holding, in the words of one of the mottoes prefixed to his book, that ‘a good dictionary

is the best metaphysical treatise,' he has been content to cast his contribution to philosophical literature in this laborious form. We find abundant evidence of the great extent and accuracy of his knowledge of philosophy; but of course a work like this affords no field for the display of that brilliant and pathetic eloquence, sullied by just the suspicion of a tendency to the tawdry and turgid, which makes him one of the most striking and attractive academic lecturers of the day. His sound sense, and complete freedom from extravagance and crotchets; his comprehensive method and his lucid style; render him an admirable teacher of his favourite science; and the moral philosophy class-room in the venerable College of Glasgow is always crowded by an enthusiastic auditory.

Although Dr. Fleming does not formally push forward his own philosophic views, we may collect from his book that he is generally a disciple of his great predecessor, Dr. Reid, the acknowledged head of the Scotch, or common-sense school in metaphysics. While Dr. Fleming would probably admit that the philosophy of the Unseen can never, for the practical purposes of daily life, rival in the general estimation the philosophy of the Material, he would still maintain that metaphysical philosophy possesses more than a historical interest and importance. And while Mr. Lewes is stopped upon the threshold, by finding that we have no satisfactory evidence on which to found a science of ontology, and so maintains that all philosophy is impossible; the Scotch school, on common-sense principles, assumes Being as a fact not admitting of

metaphysical proof, but just as little admitting of denial; and having thus found a basis, proceeds to the investigation of mental phenomena, of moral obligations and distinctions, of motives and impulses to act, and of the great truths of natural theology and revealed religion. The Scotch school has alone been successful in pointing out the way in which philosophy may be saved from passing into universal scepticism; and no one grants more readily than the leaders of that school are ready to do, that its *aliquid impercussum* is furnished by common-sense rather than by metaphysics. But we are anticipating what is to come hereafter.

A dictionary is not usually very interesting reading; but Dr. Fleming's dictionary may be read with great interest. And although the alphabetical arrangement of the *Vocabulary* necessarily makes its treatment of a cluster of cognate subjects fragmentary, any reader who will follow out the references to other words which Dr. Fleming gives under each important term, may thus piece together for himself a clear and comprehensive treatise upon almost any philosophical subject. We can well believe the statement in the preface, that the labour of producing such a work 'has been greater than the result can indicate or measure.' And we know of no book more suitable to place in the hands of a young student at his entrance upon metaphysical science.

We have already stated that Mr. Lewes holds that metaphysical speculation has run an orderly course; not indeed a course in advance, but one in which time

after time the effort has been made to grapple with the mystery of existence, and time after time the effort has been found vain, the enquirer has thrown up his investigations as impossible, and the human mind has sunk down into total scepticism ; in a little while, indeed, to rise up again with renewed energies, and to struggle through the same weary round again, with the same heartless result. It was not the individual man who completed that circle ; individual men have lived and died representing each point in it ; but such, Mr. Lewes holds, has been the ‘increasing purpose’ developed through ages, and such the process of the human race. Philosophy began in Greece : Thales is justly regarded as the father of Greek speculation. It was an epoch when a man was found who lifted up his mind from the details of material life, and enquired about something not pressed upon him by daily necessities. The first speculation was concerning the nature of the universe ; and Mr. Lewes has sought with much ingenuity to remove from the fragmentary tenets of Thales, Anaximenes, and other representative men, the air of downright folly and absurdity which at the first glance they wear. Thales, for instance, taught that ‘the principle of all things was water.’ At the first sight, the lesson appears merely silly. But Mr. Lewes, seeking to *read into* it, has discovered in it a germ of sense which Thales himself probably hardly perceived. Here is Mr. Lewes’s interpretation of the enigma of Thales :—

Thales felt that there was a vital question to be answered relative to the beginning of things. He looked around him ; and the

result of his meditation was the conviction that moisture was the beginning.

He was impressed with this idea by examining the constitution of the earth. There also he found moisture everywhere. All things he found nourished by moisture; warmth itself he declared to proceed from moisture; the seeds of all things are moist. Water when condensed becomes earth. Thus convinced of the universal presence of water, he declared it to be the beginning of all things.

Thales would all the more readily adopt this notion, from its harmonising with ancient opinions: such, for instance, as those expressed in Hesiod's theogony, wherein Oceanus and Thetis are regarded as the parents of all such deities as had any relation to nature.

The first epoch of philosophical speculation, according to Mr. Lewes, was that in which men sought to discover something as to the nature of the universe. The speculators of that epoch were of three different classes: the Physicists, the Mathematicians, and the Eleatics. Then followed an epoch in which such men as Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and Democritus, speculated upon the creation of the universe, and the origin of knowledge. Then came an intellectual crisis: thoughtful men felt that all the attempts which had been made to solve the problem of existence and of knowledge, were futile; and hence came the Sophists. Then Socrates invented and taught his new method; a fresh era was thus opened; and it was continued when the Socratic method was partially adopted by the Megaric school, the Cyrenaic, and the Cynic, and completely adopted and applied by Plato. The Socratic period closed with Aristotle. Socrates had appeared in a time of utter scepticism: he introduced a new

method, and pointed men to ethics, instead of bewildering speculations about physical nature. Aristotle led the world again to speculation; he brought philosophy back to the point where Socrates had found it.

A second crisis followed, under the same laws as the first. The Sceptics, the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the New Academy arose. All these schools were essentially sceptical; and scepticism protested against all philosophy. Mr. Lewes thus sums up the result:—

The struggles of so many men, from Thales, who first asked himself, whence do all things proceed? to the elaborate systematisation of the forms of thought which occupied an Aristotle—the struggles of all these men had ended in scepticism. Little was to be gleaned from the harvest of their endeavours but arguments against the possibility of that philosophy which they were so anxious to form. Centuries of thought had not advanced the mind one step nearer to a solution of the problems with which, child-like, it began. It began with a child-like question; it ended with an aged doubt. Not only did it doubt the solutions of the great problem which others had attempted, it even doubted the possibility of any solution. It was not the doubt which begins, but the doubt which ends enquiry; it had no illusions.

Reason had now but one recourse; it allied itself with faith, and Alexandria was the theatre of the great effort to construct a religious philosophy. Neo-Platonism arose; then Neo-Platonism was felt to be antagonistic to Christianity. The Alexandrian school was finally defeated with Proclus:—

With Proclus the Alexandrian school expired; with him philosophy ceased. Religion, and religion alone, seemed capable of affording satisfactory answers to the questions which

perplexed the human race; and philosophy was reduced to the subordinate office which the Alexandrians had consigned to the Aristotelian logic. Philosophy became the servant of religion, no longer reigning in its own right.

Thus was the circle of endeavour completed. With Thales, reason separated itself from faith; with the Alexandrians, the two were again united. The centuries between these epochs were filled with helpless struggles to overcome an insuperable difficulty.

We have already stated that Mr. Lewes, holding that the ancient philosophy ended with Proclus, and the modern began with Bacon, has contented himself with interposing three stepping-stones in the long space between, in the names of Abelard, Algazzali, and Giordano Bruno. The first epoch in the modern philosophy was the foundation of the inductive method, with which, of course, Mr. Lewes couples the name of Bacon. The second epoch was the foundation of the deductive method, associated with the name of Descartes. Spinoza brought about the first intellectual crisis in the modern philosophy; ontology gave way to psychology. It was now felt that knowledge dependent on experience must necessarily be merely knowledge of *phenomena*. Experience could only mean experience of ourselves as modified by objects. To know things *per se*, that is, what are called *noumena* in opposition to phenomena, we must know them through some other channel than experience. And psychology was studied in order to find an answer to the question, Have we ideas independent of experience? We know outward things relatively; that is, as they transmit to us, through the media of sense, their pictures and ideas: but can

we know things absolutely ;—that is, as they are in themselves, though there were no eye to see them, no fingers to touch them, no ear to hear them ?

Thus Mr. Lewes's third epoch is that of Hobbes, Locke, and Leibnitz. And Mr. Lewes holds that Locke brought things to a point which demonstrated the impossibility of philosophy : inasmuch as he showed that all knowledge is derived from experience, in its two forms of sensation and reflection ; and so that we know things only relatively, not absolutely. Mr. Lewes, it will be observed, throughout his work identifies philosophy with ontology ; and while most men will admit that ontology is impossible, few, we believe, will agree with him in thinking that this of necessity implies the impossibility of all metaphysics. From Locke's system there proceeded three distinct systems ; the admitted fact that knowledge is subjective, resulted in the idealism of Berkeley, the scepticism of Hume, and the sensationalism of Condillac. Then came a crisis : it was the reaction of common sense. Dr. Reid, the head of the Scotch school, held, that although we cannot justly be said to pass beyond the limits of consciousness, and so cannot be said precisely to know things *per se*, still we cannot choose but believe that things are in themselves what they seem to us. We cannot possibly doubt that sense transmits to us an account of the external world, which is accurate so far as it goes. And we believe this, just because the common consent of mankind has decided the question. Kant, anxious to have *data* of a more purely philosophical character to found upon, sought them in a critical

examination of the reason itself. But as Kant admitted that we know things only relatively—only, that is, as by the make of our mind we are constrained to know them—idealism again emerged, as exemplified in the views of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. In a following epoch, a strong reaction, there came a desire to find in physiology a basis for psychology : hence came phrenology. And finally, philosophy relinquished its place in favour of positive science. Eclecticism, indeed, pretended to select what was true from among the many systems of mingled truth and error ; but who was to decide what was true and what was false ? If a man does not *know* chaff from wheat, how is he to separate the two ? Finally, as Mr. Lewes holds, comes Auguste Comte. All we have now to do is to observe and classify *laws* : that is, the ways in which phenomena succeed phenomena. We know nothing of essence, nothing of causes ; one thing we know, that such a thing always follows such another thing. And Mr. Lewes thinks that the day is not distant when the Positive method will be universally accepted, ‘at least among the *élite* of humanity.’

In the conclusion of his work, Mr. Lewes thus sums up the course which philosophy has run :—

After the Eleatics had vexed the problem of existence to no purpose, then came Democritus, Anaxagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, who endeavoured to settle the problems of the nature and origin of human knowledge. So in modern times, after Descartes and Spinoza, came Hobbes, Locke, Leibnitz, Reid, and Kant. The ancient researches into the origin of knowledge, ended in the Sceptics, the Stoics, and the New Academy : that is to say, in scepticism, common sense, and scepticism again. The modern researches ended in Berkeley, Hume, Reid, and Kant ;

that is, in idealism, scepticism, common sense, and scepticism again. These enquiries terminating thus fruitlessly, a new and desperate spring was made in Alexandria ; reason was given up for ecstasy ; philosophy merged itself in religion. In Germany a similar spectacle presents itself. Schelling identified philosophy with religion. Thus has philosophy completed its circle, and we are left in this nineteenth century precisely at the same point at which we were in the fifth.

Such is the course which philosophy has run. Let us select from another part of Mr. Lewes's book Comte's view of what it has ended in :—

Humanity has three stages—the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. Whether we examine the history of nations, of individuals, or of special sciences, we find that speculation always commences with supernatural explanations, advances to metaphysical explanations, and finally reposes in positive explanations. The first is the necessary point of departure taken by human intelligence ; the second is merely a stage of transition from the supernatural to the positive ; and the third is the fixed and definite condition in which knowledge is alone capable of progressive development.

In the theological stage the mind regards all effects as the productions of supernatural agents, whose intervention is the *cause* of all the apparent anomalies and irregularities. Nature is animated by supernatural beings. Every unusual phenomenon is a sign of the pleasure or displeasure of some being adored and propitiated as a god. The lowest condition of this stage is that of the savages, viz., Fetishism. The highest condition is when one being is substituted for many, as the cause of all phenomena.

In the metaphysical stage, which is only a modification of the former, but which is important as a transitional stage, the supernatural agents give place to abstract forces (personified abstractions), supposed to inhere in the various substances, and capable themselves of engendering phenomena. The highest condition of this stage is when all these forces are brought under one general force, named Nature.

In the positive stage the mind, convinced of the futility of all enquiry into causes and essences, applies itself to the observation and classification of *laws* which regulate effects : that is to say, the invariable relations of succession and similitude which all things bear to each other. The highest condition of this stage would be, to be able to represent all phenomena as the various particulars of one general view.

These three stages do not always occur in strictly chronological order. Some sciences arrive more rapidly than others at the positive stage. Astronomy, for example, is now in so positive a condition, that we need nothing but the laws of dynamics and gravitation to explain all celestial phenomena : and we know that our explanation is correct, so far as we can know anything, because we can calculate and predict the fact as it actually falls out,—we can, for example, calculate the season of a comet's return, and fix accurately at the year's beginning when the sun will rise upon each day throughout its course. But meteorology is not yet in the positive stage, and so people are still found to pray for rain or fair weather : whereas, once the laws of meteorology settled, men would not pray for rain any more than they would pray that the sun might rise at midnight. If rain is to come, it *will* come ; and no supernatural power, so far as we have reason to think, will intermeddle in the matter. And the same man may have attained to the positive stage in one science, while he has only reached the metaphysical in another, and is groping in the theological in a third. Mr. Lewes says :—

The same man who in physics may be said to have arrived at the positive stage, and who recognises no other object of enquiry

than the *laws* of phenomena, will be found still a slave to the metaphysical stage in biology, and endeavouring to detect the *cause* of life, and so little emancipated from the supernatural stage in sociology, that if you talk to him of the *possibility* of a science of history, or a social science, he will laugh at you as a 'theorizer.'

Such, then, is the Positive philosophy ; if indeed, we may so term a system which denies the possibility of any philosophy at all. It watches, it observes, it notes down, it does not pretend to explain. But it does more than merely pretermit explanation. If it did no more than *that*, it would simply be the philosophy of induction and generalisation, under another name. But it denies the possibility of explanation. It holds it folly to attempt explanation. It believes what it sees ; but it goes further, and believes nothing which it does not see. It is nothing new to tell us that in metaphysical as in material science we must proceed by the method of induction, by observing phenomena, noting them, and classifying them. The essential characteristic of Positivism is rather in what it forbids than in what it commands. It says to us, observe, note, classify, and STOP THERE. Do not reason or infer from what you see. And it is on the *stop there* that Positivism lays the emphasis. It is because this is well understood, that Positivism is regarded with suspicion. It is because this is so, that Positivism is dangerous. Either the *stop there* is not the *differentia* of Positivism—and *then* it is a system of sulky submission to the old logic of induction and the Scotch school of common sense : or the *stop there* is the *differentia* of Positivism—and *then*

let a man clearly understand, before he receives it, how much it bids him stop short of.

For it is only too plain, that Positivism bids us stop short of all theology, of all religion, perhaps of all morality. Positivism is Atheism. Not that it expressly says, 'There is no God : ' but that it shakes its head when a Deity is mentioned, and says, 'I know nothing at all about that.' It says, 'I see phenomena succeeding other phenomena ; but I do not ask, and I do not know, why. *That* is beyond my sphere : and it is beyond my sphere, because it is beyond the sphere to which the human mind is limited. You say that *law* can do nothing ; that it simply is the mode in which a real agent must be working. I have nothing to say about *that* ; and I advise you to have nothing to do with it either. Keep to what you can see. What cannot be seen, may be, or may not be. I do not pretend to know which alternative is right, but my inclination is towards the latter.'

Such is the real teaching of the Positivism of the present day. Not that we for a moment suggest that Mr. Lewes is prepared to go *that* length. We know too well how men wedded to any principle whatever, *will* shake themselves free of consequences from that principle which all but themselves discern to be inevitable. We infer nothing as to Mr. Lewes's ulterior belief, from the doctrine which he holds in philosophy. For anything we can certainly learn from his speculative metaphysics, he may be the sternest of moralists and the most enthusiastic of religionists. All we say is, that as it appears to us, Positivism either means nothing,

or it means Atheism. It is either assenting with a growl of dissatisfaction to the philosophy of common sense—and although many Positivists express themselves in guarded terms which virtually mean this, we do not believe that the leaders of the school would have ushered in as a grand discovery what really amounts to nothing,—or the negative side of Positivism is its true and characteristic one; and *then* it necessarily results in *that* development to which we know most Positivists have avowedly pushed it—of total scepticism in religion; of Atheism, or non-Theism, if the word be preferred; and of what is called by its adherents *Secularism*, or an entire and exclusive devotion to the interests of a present life. The principle on which Mr. Holyoake and the members of his school proceed, in professedly confining their thoughts and endeavours to the visible world, is not by any means that they assuredly believe that there is no world beyond the grave. The Secularist and Positivist admits that there *may be* another world: all he says is, ‘I have no proof that there is another world; I am quite sure that there is a present world: and I shall hold by *that* of which I am sure.’ *That* is accurate and legitimate Positivism. For Positivism simply means to keep to what you certainly know; and as for all things else, to pass them by and let them alone. The Secularist does not say for certain that there is no God and no immortality. He says there may be, for what he knows. Perhaps there is a God. Perhaps the soul is immortal. But he has no direct sensible proof that it is so: and so, on the Positive

principle, he pretermits all consideration of that of which he is not absolutely sure.

And now the question arises—Is it really necessary, as Mr. Lewes maintains, to have recourse to Positivism? Is there no way of escaping the alternative, so plausible in its first statement, so dismal in its results? Is the obstacle which meets us at the very threshold of philosophy so impassable that we must sit down before it in despair, and renounce all hope of ever knowing anything beyond? Let us now carefully look at the obstacle, and see whether it must indeed finally stop us. Perhaps the flank of the opposing force may be turned by German subtlety. Perhaps the Gordian knot may be severed by Scotch common sense.

We are anxious, in what follows, to appeal to readers not sophisticated in metaphysics; and we shall do our best to make the state of the question plain.

The great stumbling-block, then, which, Mr. Lewes maintains, makes metaphysical certitude impossible, is the *subjectivity of our knowledge*: that is, the fact, admitted on all hands, that all our knowledge of things external to ourselves is derived solely from the moods of our own mind. Hence it is maintained that it follows, first, that we have no sufficient proof that there exists anything external to ourselves at all; and secondly, even granting that there are things external to ourselves, we have no sufficient proof that they are what they seem to us.

Now the three great questions of metaphysics are—

1. Has human knowledge any absolute certainty?
2. What is the nature of God?

3. What is the origin of the external world ?

And of course it is evident that if the first question is answered in the negative, metaphysical science is arrested on the threshold. If it is decided that man can know nothing certainly, it is useless to go on to enquire about anything.

Of the existence of our own mind we are assured by consciousness ; and consciousness is evidence which even the metaphysician must sustain as sufficient. *Cogito, ergo sum*, may not be reasoning ; but it states an ultimate fact. Consciousness assures us of the existence of our own mind, and of the sequence of moods and feelings in it : and there Mr. Lewes holds we must stop ; we have no metaphysical certitude of anything further. The system of common sense says—No : we must take the first step out of ourselves without exact reasoning, but on the authority of something as irresistible ; and once we get beyond the limit of our own consciousness, we have all the universe before us into which to enquire.

If any man were to tell a person of ordinary intelligence, not bewildered by metaphysical reasonings, that we have no ground at all for believing in the existence of an external world, *that* representative person would probably regard his informant as a fool or a knave. He would say, Are there not trees, and fields, and houses, and men, and countless interests beginning and hinging on these seen realities, around me day by day ? So far from feeling it easy to realise the existence of a world of mind, and hard to realise that of a world of matter, most men could testify from their own experience that

the difficulty is all the other way. The Christian's prayer is for grace to 'walk by faith, and not by sight.' The material things and interests amid which we dwell are only too successful in crowding out of the soul the care and the remembrance of 'the things which are not seen.'

Yet it is not a quibble, but an incontestable truth, that all we have truly indisputable evidence of, is the existence of mind, and conditions of mind. All, except the universal sceptic, or the absolute nihilist, believe in the existence of their own mind and of its passing moods. How, then, do we know of the existence of an external world? Thus: Amid the successive states of our mind, there are certain states, termed states of *sensation*, which somehow we have got into the way of referring for their causes to things beyond our own personality. And not only do we think that these states of mind are caused by things beyond ourselves, but that these give us information as to the nature and qualities of these outward things. Thus, the idea or impression of redness or roundness is only in the mind; but we voluntarily and inevitably judge that this idea or impression is the result of something without; and, likewise, that this something without is red or round. In short, the inevitable belief of all unsophisticated men everywhere has been, that from phenomena we can reason to noumena, and that things *are* in themselves what they *seem* to us.

The teaching of the common-sense school is this: that along with the purely passive state of mind which is termed *sensation*, there goes an intellectual act which

is termed *perception*, which consists in a necessary reference of the sensation for its cause, (1) to something beyond our own mind; (2) to some special external object: (3) of whose qualities we regard the sensation it conveys as making us in some degree aware.

But the question comes—If all that you are conscious of is states of the mind, how can you know that these states are the result of causes external? Was not Bishop Berkeley right when he said that all we are sure of is mind, and states of mind, and that there is no such thing as matter at all? And was not Hume's more sweeping scepticism just the fair inference from the fact which all admit? In the words of Mr. Lewes,—

As I cannot transcend the sphere of my consciousness, I can never know things except as they act upon me—as they affect my consciousness. In other words, a knowledge of the external world otherwise than as it appears to my sense, *which transforms and distorts it*, is impossible.

While other schools have laboriously sought to explain all this, the common-sense school have taken the ground that the circumstances need, as they admit of, no explanation. Our perception of an external world is an ultimate fact, upon which reasoning is thrown away. By the make of our being, we *must* believe in a world beyond ourselves; and it is certainly much more likely that sense will inform us rightly, than that (according to Mr. Lewes's gratuitous and groundless assumption) it will 'transform and distort' the notions it conveys to us. What resemblance there may be

between the notion conveyed to us by sensational perception, and the thing itself of which we have the perception, we cannot, indeed, certainly know. It is conceivable that the phenomenon *may be* something very different from the noumenon. *That* which gives us the impression that it is a tree, *may be* something very different from what it seems. *That* which gives us the impression that it is a page of *Fraser's Magazine*, *may be* something else in fact. All we can say of the supposition is, that it is properly incredible. No man *can* think so. But reasoning in the case is futile. The purpose of reasoning is to show that which is false to be absurd; and the sceptic's supposition is absurd already, before reasoning has touched it. And although sensations may not *resemble* their external causes, still they may suggest to us the truth as to these external causes. A black-edged letter does not *resemble* a friend's death, though it correctly informs us of it.

The common-sense philosophy admits that there is no precise metaphysical proof of an external world, its objects and their qualities; but it holds that *common sense* affords us evidence quite as cogent and indubitable as metaphysical proof. And upon this point all men are virtually and practically agreed. The sceptic lays the emphasis on the lack of metaphysical proof; the common-sense philosophy lays the emphasis upon the inevitable necessity of believing without metaphysical proof. As was said by Dr. Thomas Brown, 'Yes, Reid bawled out we must believe in an outward world; but added, in a whisper, we can give no reason for our belief. Hume bawls out, we can give no reason for

such a notion ; and whispers, I own we cannot get rid of it.'

And our readers will probably believe that there can be no better refutation of a doctrine than just to feel that to go out from our chamber into the free air, and to look around on the trees, and fields, and hedges, blows the doctrine away into annihilation. We cannot help believing that these *are* trees, and fields, and hedges, just as they seem to us, notwithstanding Mr. Lewes's declaration that they are distorted and deformed by the misrepresentations of sense. And why distorted and deformed ? If there be things external at all, what earthly reason is there for fancying that they *are* in any respect other than they *seem* ? More organs of sense might show us that outward things possess qualities which are now unrevealed to us ; but is there the remotest probability that these additional senses would contradict the assurances of those which we already possess ? If we find the metaphysician who professes to disbelieve the existence of anything external to himself ; or to believe that he may indeed be living in an outward world, but one composed of shams and delusions placed there to delude him without aim or end ; yet conducting himself like other men—interested in politics, sharp as to money, conscious of the existence and qualities of his dinner, his garden, his servants, his books, his easy chair—it follows certainly that the metaphysician *does* believe in the existence of external nature, and *does* believe that things are what they seem. Dreary beyond imagining would the belief be, if the belief could be at

all, that the individual *I* have gone through what we call life, the sole occupant of a world peopled solely by my own ideas. Does a watchmaker, busied in arranging his springs and wheels, toil to polish and adjust his own mental impressions? Does he try by delicate touches to get things so that their 'distorted images' may appear right to him? Did we, in company with two or three clusters of ideas, which we call our gardeners, plant carefully, this November day, the ideas of hollies and cypresses? Is Mr. Lewes an idea in the mind of me, the writer of this article? Is the income-tax an hallucination in the anxious annuitant's own mind?

But still the metaphysician replies that although the evidence he has of the existence of an outward world be quite sufficient for his practice and for his guidance in actual life, it is not sufficient as a foundation on which to build a philosophy. 'I can get no foundation,' he says; 'and why, then, seek to build a superstructure which has nothing on which to rest?' And the main characteristic of the common-sense school is its maintaining that common sense furnishes a foundation sufficient for philosophy as well as for practical life.

Mr. Lewes is of opinion that the Scotch philosophy has fallen into merited contempt. We join issue with him. It has appeared satisfactory and sufficient to the most acute and comprehensive thinkers the world has seen. And it can hardly be said that a system has fallen into contempt, when it is confessedly the system on which all mankind habitually and necessarily act, and without which the business of mankind must stand

still. There are such things, Mr. Lewes will admit, as ethics, politics, and physics: there is such a thing as religion: and on what do all these rest, if not on the fundamental principle of the common-sense school?

The truth is that Mr. Lewes is virtually an adherent of that school, of Reid and Stewart, of which he speaks so depreciatingly. That school holds, in common with Mr. Lewes, that the science of ontology must be given up: the essence of either matter or mind is unknown to us, and we know nothing but qualities of either. Therefore, say the Scotch metaphysicians, let us, as to the external world, practise the physical system of induction; and as to the mental world, let us keep to psychology, or the inductive examination of the *phenomena* of mind. As to the *noumena* of either mind or matter we know nothing, and it is not needful that we should know anything. In fact, the common-sense system is precisely the Positive system, if we understand the Positive system in that sense in which it is reasonable, safe, and true. But while Mr. Lewes, pushing Positivism into theory, proposes, in pet that he cannot know the essence of matter and mind, to throw metaphysics overboard altogether, and to declare that all philosophy is impossible, the common-sense school proposes to take for granted what *must* be taken for granted if we are to live at all, and to see whether a superstructure of metaphysics as well as of physics cannot be raised upon that safe and inevitable assumption. The common-sense philosophers, in short, propose to base a philosophic system on the same foundation on which rest the Pyramids, the Britannia-

bridge, the North-Western Railway. Mr. Lewes virtually follows the self-same course: the point at issue between him and the advocates of common sense is merely as to the name by which the system adopted by both shall be distinguished. The matter in dispute is this: Mr. Lewes says to the Scotch metaphysicians, 'Yes, you propose a Positive system, and I entirely agree with you in the system which you propose—but *that is not philosophy*. Your system,' Mr. Lewes would say, 'is a sound, sensible, working system, on which the world may proceed excellently well; but it is not a *metaphysical* system.' And this is the point of difference. All men virtually agree in a Positivism, not pushed to an extreme: but shall we call it a philosophical system, or a system which denies the possibility of all philosophy? The Scotch School calls the system the Philosophy of Common Sense—the Philosophy of Induction. Mr. Lewes holds the system just as firmly, but says that it is no philosophy at all; that by embracing it we are really casting philosophy to the winds. Yet it is remarkable how the statements of Mr. Lewes and Dr. Reid converge, even upon this question of terminology. When Dr. Reid says, as to the existence and qualities of an external world, 'I renounce philosophy, and hold by common sense,' what is this but stating, strongly and clearly, Mr. Lewes's own position? But Dr. Reid says that having scrambled somehow or other across the gulf which parts mind and matter—having received the evidence of sense and consciousness as something which precludes the necessity of any reasoning—we may now go

on to erect a system of psychology, of ethics, of religion, which may be properly called a philosophical system. Mr. Lewes, on the contrary, holds that, wanting the first link, we need go no further in constructing the chain. The first step in the pedigree of philosophy is not philosophical: and this vitiates all that is to follow, and prevents it from ever growing entitled to be called philosophy at all. The Scotch school says, 'Let us be content; let us make the most of what we have got, though it be not all we could have wished.' Mr. Lewes says, 'As I cannot get all I want, I shall have nothing.' Whatever this principle may be worth intellectually, surely it is morally very poor philosophy. It is the very condition of our being in this world that we must take and make the best of, not what we desire, but what we can get. Intellectually, as well as socially and politically, it is no system of optimism under which we live. It is enough if things are so, that they *will do*. They might do far better. It is all we are to look for in a present life that the world shall go on, though with many an uneasy jolt, and strain, and struggle.

We cannot but admire the ingenuity, the information, the comprehensive grasp of Mr. Lewes's work. The fact that the book was originally written to be addressed to a popular audience accounts for the familiar strain of many of its illustrations, and may excuse some which approach near to the confines of clap-trap. There are passages in which Mr. Lewes's style, always clear, lively, and pointed, appears to us such as would somewhat grate on a fastidious taste; but of course it is

merely a question *whose* opinion on such a matter is worth most, Mr. Lewes's or his reviewer's. We have a strong conviction that in philosophic opinion Mr. Lewes is still in a transition state; and we doubt not that a few years, if we are spared to see them, will find him one of the most eloquent, most subtle, and most learned of the adherents and advocates of the system of common sense. And we have felt with pleasure in reading his book that it was no mere musty metaphysician whose pen had written these attractive pages. The skill and ease of the accomplished author were apparent everywhere. Mr. Lewes has won laurels in other fields than the now little-trodden one of speculative philosophy. The accomplished biographer, the keen observer, and the graceful narrator of physical changes and appearances, the generous appreciator of struggling genius, will number many readers whom the name of philosophy, grim and repellent, will keep off from ever opening a volume so grave as this. And surely when Mr. Lewes, in days devoted to new *Seaside Studies*, shall look out upon sunny waves and golden sunsets, he will feel a gentle remorse that, in his ardour to support a point of pure speculation, he should ever have so far maligned nature as to maintain that she appears to us 'distorted and deformed.' Outward nature, we think, will suffice as she is, even in a fallen world. It is a beautiful world after all. On blue skies and blossoming trees there is no apparent taint cast from the dark domain of evil. It is the world of mind that needs amending. It is *there* that we trace an ever-recurring stain, for which no philosophy can

account, and which no philosophy can remove. And in a higher Presence than that of human intellect or its results we render thanks for a gracious system which can enlighten and comfort simple hearts which could make nothing of metaphysics. In the true philosophy, the grand Positivism of Christianity, there is rest at last ; and rest within the reach of all.

III.

THORNDALE ; OR, THE CONFLICT OF OPINIONS.*

AUTHORS, moral and political, have of late years been recognising the fact, that abstract truths become much more generally attractive when something of human interest is added to them. Most people feel as if thoughts and opinions gain a more substantial being, and lose their ghost-like intangibility, when we know something of the character and history of the man who entertained them, and something of the outward scenery amid which he entertained them. Very many persons feel as if, in passing from fact, or what purports to be fact, to principle, they were exchanging the firm footing of solid land for the yielding and impalpable air; and a framework of scenes and persons is like a wing to buoy them up in traversing that unaccustomed medium. And there are few indeed to whom a peculiar interest does not result when views and opinions, instead of standing nakedly on the printed page, are stated and discussed in friendly council by

* *Thorndale ; or, the Conflict of Opinions.* By William Smith. Edinburgh : 1857.

individual men, seated upon a real grassy slope, canopied by substantial trees, and commanding a prospect of real hills, and streams, and valleys. It is not entirely true that argument has its weight and force in itself, quite apart from its author. In the matter of practical effect, on actual human beings, a good deal depends on the lips it comes from.

The author of *Thorndale* has recognised and acted upon this principle. Mr. William Smith is a philosopher and a poet ; and whoever sits down to read his new book as an ordinary work of fiction, to be hurried through for its plot-interest, will probably not turn many pages before closing the volume. The great purpose of the work is to set out a variety of opinions upon several matters which concern the highest interests of the individual man and of the human race ; but, instead of presenting them in naked abstractness, Mr. Smith has *set* them in a slight story, and given them as the tenets or the fancies of different men, whose characters are so drawn that these tenets and fancies appear to be just their natural culmination and result. If we were disposed to be hypercritical, we might say that the different characters sketched by Mr. Smith are too plainly built up to serve as the *substrata* of the opinions which they express. There is hardly allowance enough made for the waywardness and inconsistency of human conclusion and action. Given any one of Mr. Smith's men in certain circumstances, and we are only too sure of what he will do or say. The Utopian is always hopeful ; the desponding philosopher is never brightened up by a ray of hope. But

this, it is obvious, is a result arrived at upon system; for we shall find abundant proof in the volume that Mr. Smith has read deeply and accurately into human nature, in all its weaknesses, fancies, hopes, and fears. It is long since we have met with a more remarkable or worthy book. Mr. Smith is always thoughtful and suggestive: he has been entirely successful in carrying out his wish to produce a volume in reading which a thoughtful man will often pause with his finger between the leaves, and muse upon what he has read. We judge that the book must have been written slowly, and at intervals, from its affluence of beautiful thought. No mind could have turned off such material with the equable flow of a stream. We know few works in which there may be found so many fine thoughts, light-bringing illustrations, and happy turns of expression, to invite the reader's pencil. A delicate refinement, a simple and pathetic eloquence, a kindly sympathy with all sentient things, are everywhere apparent: but the construction of the book, in which the most opposite opinions are expressed by the different characters, without the least editorial comment, approval or disapproval, renders it difficult to judge what are truly the opinions of the author himself. Mr. Smith's English style is of classic beauty: nothing can surpass the delicate grace and finish of many passages of description and reflection; and although it was of course impossible, and indeed not desirable, that equal pains should be bestowed upon the melody of all the pages of the book, still the language is never slovenly; the hand of the tasteful scholar is everywhere. Nor

should we fail to remark the author's versatility of power. Everything he does is done with equal ease and felicity,—description of external nature, analysis of feeling and motive, close logic, large views of men and things. There is not the gentle and graceful humour of Mr. Helps: the book is serious throughout, with no infusion of playfulness. The author evidently thinks that in this world there is not much to smile at,—unless it be at everything. Let us remark that in this volume the characters come and go as in real life. There is nothing of the novel's artificial working up of interest, deepening to the close. Mr. Smith may say of his book, as Mr. Bailey of his grand but unequal poem—

It has a plan, but no plot:—Life has none.

But Mr. Smith's men, after all, are not such as one commonly meets. They are all greatly occupied, and for the most part perplexed and distressed, about speculative and social difficulties. Now in ordinary life such distresses are little felt. Are we wrong in saying that they are never felt at all, except in idleness—or by minds far above the average of the race? How little are the perplexities of speculation to the busy man, anxious and toiling to find the means of maintaining his wife and children, of paying his Christmas bills, and generally of making the ends meet at the close of the year! *That*, whether we admit the fact or deny it, is, with the great majority even of cultivated men, the practical problem of life. And indeed it is sad to think how, long before middle age, in many a man

who started with higher aspirations, *that* becomes the great end of labour and of thought. But it seems to be a law of mind that as the grosser and more material wants are supplied, other wants of a more ethereal and fanciful nature come to be felt. And thus perhaps many a man, whom circumstances now compel to bestow all his energies on the quest of the supply of the day that is passing over him and his, is by those very circumstances saved from feeling wants more crushing, and from grappling with riddles and mysteries that sit with a heavy perplexity upon the heart. Let us be thankful if we are not too independent of work: let us be thankful that we are not too thoughtful and able.

Mr. Smith's book sets out with a charming description of a secluded dwelling to which a young philosophic thinker, smitten by consumption, had retired to die. On a little terrace, near the summit of Mount Posilipo, there stands a retired villa, looking from that height over the Bay of Naples. Overlooked by none, it commands a wide extent of view. Myrtle and roses have overgrown its pillared front. The rock descends sheer down from the terrace. Charles Thorndale, the hero of the book, had been charmed by the *Villa Scarpa* in the course of a continental tour, made while still in health; and when stricken with the disease of which he died, and when the physician spoke of the climate of Italy, he chose this for his last retreat. It would not be long he would be there, he knew; and in its quiet he had much to think of.

It is a spot, one would say, in which it would be very hard to part with this divine faculty of thought. It seemed made for

the very spirit of meditation. The little platform on which the villa stands is so situated that, while it commands the most extensive prospect imaginable, it is itself entirely sheltered from observation. No house of any kind overlooks it; from no road is it visible; not a sound from the neighbouring city ascends to it. From one part of the parapet that bounds the terrace you may sometimes catch sight of a swarthy bare-legged fisherman, sauntering on the beach, or lying at full length in the sun. It is the only specimen of humanity you are likely to behold: you live solely in the eye of nature. It is with difficulty you can believe that within the space of an hour you may, if you choose it, be elbowing your way, jostled and stunned, among the swarming population of Naples—surely the noisiest hive of human beings anywhere to be found on the face of the earth. Here, on these heights, is perfect stillness with perfect beauty. What voices come to you come from the upper air—the winds and the melody of birds; and not unfrequently the graceful sea-gull utters its short plaintive cry, as it wheels round and back to its own ocean fields. And then that glorious silent picture for ever open to the eye! Picture! you hastily retract the word. It is no dead picture; it is the living spirit of the universe, manifesting itself, in glorious vision, to the eye and the soul of man.

Thorndale was a studious man, but had not been attracted by either of the learned professions. His modest competency relieved him from the necessity of choosing a decided path in life. Like many meditative idlers, he intended, vaguely, to write a book; and, indeed, he did finish a philosophical treatise more than once; but he always became dissatisfied with it and destroyed it. But in his retirement at Villa Scarpa a large manuscript volume lay on his table, in which, ‘the habit of the pen’ clinging to him to the last, he was accustomed to write down his thoughts upon whatever topic interested him for the time. This book was

autobiography, essay, diary, record of former conversations with friends, as the humour of the moment prompted ; and we are invited to believe that this book, having fallen into the hands of Mr. Smith, is now given to the world :—

It is precisely this manuscript volume, note-book, memoir, diary, whatever it should be called, which we have to present to the reader. In it Thorndale, though apparently with little of set purpose or design, gives us a description of himself and of several friends, or rather sketches out their opinions and modes of thinking. Amongst these two may be at once particularly mentioned : *Clarence*, who might be called a representative of the philosophy of hope ; and *Seckendorf*, his complete contrast, and who, especially on the subject of human progress, takes the side of denial or of cavil.

The author, or editor, sets before us the character of his hero, less by one complete description than by many touches, given here and there, as he exhibits Thorndale to us in various combinations of circumstances, and at several critical points in his life. Our impression of Thorndale is being retouched, modified, lightened, and shadowed on to the close of the book. He was a meditative and melancholy man, of little pith or active energy ; he was shy and retiring, overshadowed by a settled despondency, but always kind and gentle, with no trace of fretfulness or irritability. Although his character is an interesting and truthful one, it is essentially morbid ; and we may be glad that men like him must always be few. We should have no railroads, no *Great Easterns*, no ocean telegraphs, in a world peopled by Thorndales. The weakly physical constitution which he bore from birth had

much to do with the tone of his thought and feeling. The remark is in the main just and sound, though it was made by Boswell :—

The truth is, that we judge of the happiness of misery of life differently at different times, according to the state of our changeable frame. I always remember a remark made to me by a Turkish Lady educated in France: *Ma foi, monsieur, notre bonheur dépend de la façon que notre sang circule.*

Nor ought we to forget that deeply philosophic remark of Sydney Smith, that little stoppages in the bodily circulation are the things which, above all others, darken our views of life and of man. A friend, said the genial physiologist, comes to him in a most depressed condition. He declares that his affairs are getting embarrassed ; that he must retrench his establishment and retire to the country ; that his daughter's cough has settled upon the lungs ; that his wife is breaking up, and his son going to the mischief. But Sydney only asked on what he supped the evening before, and finds that he then partook of lobster to an undue degree. ' All this,' he says, ' all these gloomy views are the lobster.' Instead of seeking directly to minister to a mind diseased, he does so indirectly, but not the less effectually. He suggests medicine, not philosophy. And next day the world is a capital world, after all ; the income is ample, the cough is gone, the wife is in rude health, and the son all that a father's heart could wish. Now in the case of Thorndale, there was an entire deficiency of healthy animalism ; and if, as a Scotch divine lately declared in a sermon published by royal command, it is easier for a

camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a dyspeptic man to be kind, gentle, and long-suffering ; not less true is it that a well-knit, vigorous, sinewy mind is oftentimes trammelled and hampered all through life, by being linked to a weakly, puny, jaded body. How much of Sydney Smith's wit, how much of Christopher North's reckless abandonment of glee, was the result of physical organisation ! How incomprehensible to many men must such despondency as Thorndale's seem ! No worldly wants or anxieties, no burden of remorse, kind friends around him, what right had he to be unhappy ?* Thorndale, in short, is a less energetic and passionate form of the nameless hero of *Maud*. Shall we confess that a less happy association at certain points in his history suggested itself to our mind ? We thought of Mr. Augustus Moddle ; of whom his historian records as follows :—

He often informed Mrs. Todgers that the sun had set upon him ; that the billows had rolled over him ; that the car of Jugernaut had crushed him ; and also that the deadly upas tree of Java had blighted him.†

Young men, who at five-and-twenty profess that they have lost all interest in life, and that they have

* We remember a review of *Maud* which we read in a certain provincial journal. The writer evidently thought the gloomy hero an ungrateful and querulous fellow for making such a moan. 'Why,' said the reviewer, 'the man was in very comfortable circumstances: he was able to have two servants ("I keep but a man and a maid") : and what earthly right had he to be always grumbling? If a man has two servants ought he not to be content?'

† Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

done with time, are by no means uncommon. But Byron's influence is wearing out, and they are pretty generally laughed at. Yet where a lad at college can say sincerely, as Thorndale said—

For me there was more excitement to be got out of any dingy book, thumbed over by a solitary rushlight, than from fifty ball-rooms—

his mind is taking a morbid growth, which bodes no good to himself; nor are things better when he goes on a tour to the Cumberland lakes, and instead of cheerfully enjoying the scenes around him, goes on as follows :—

Forgetful of lake and mountain, my eyes fixed perhaps on the topmost bar of some roadside gate, which I had *intended* to open, or pausing stock-still before some hedgerow in the solitary lane, apparently intent upon the buds of the hawthorn, as if I were penetrating into the very secrets of vegetable life, I have stood for hours musing on the intricate problems which our social condition presents to us.

We need not say that such a man is out of his place in England in the nineteenth century. In this age we want, not visionaries, but actors; healthy, robust men, like Arnold, who can think and reason, and who can likewise walk five miles in the hour. Perhaps, indeed, the cry for 'Muscular Christianity' is passing into cant; and we know of noble minds which, notwithstanding the clog of physical debility and suffering, bear a kindly sympathy towards all mankind, and make the race their debtors for the gift of elevating thoughts. But as for Thorndale—sensitive as the mimosa, ever watching

with introverted eye the lights and shadows of his own mind—how could he be happy? A certain amount of insensibility is in this world needful to that. We must not bear a nervous system so delicately appreciative of external influences as to keep us ever on the flutter or on the rack. Above all, let us have the equable mind, though it should live in a light which is uniformly subdued, rather than that which is ever alternating between April sunshine and April gloom. Justly and thoughtfully did Wordsworth make this equanimity a marked characteristic of the happiness of a higher life :—

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel,
In worlds whose course is equable and pure :
No fears to beat away, no strife to heal,
The past unsighed for, and the future sure :
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued.*

We may have faults to find with the character of Thorndale, regarded as that of a representative man : but we feel at once with what delicate accuracy the author maintains its keeping. From first to last, he never speaks or acts otherwise than he ought, under the given conditions. The malady that killed him had marked him from his birth ; and he is always the same kindly, tender-hearted, meditative, unenergetic, spiritless being. Mr. Smith shows us the whole man by one happy touch. Thorndale had chosen the shores of Loch Lomond as his autumn retreat one year. He had been there only a day, when he suddenly resolved

* *Laodamia.*

that he would return and seek the hand of a gentle cousin whom he loved, and who appears not to have been indifferent to him. He had hitherto kept silence, because her worldly position was higher than his own. He left Loch Lomond on the instant; he travelled on day and night; he seemed never to have drawn breath till he stood at the gate of the shrubbery that surrounded Sutton Manor, her home and his.

Then indeed I paused. Leaning on the half-opened gate, I saw again my own position in its true and natural light. Was it not always known and understood that *such a thing was not to be*? One after the other, all my fallacious reasonings deserted me. What madness could have brought me there! I hoped no one had seen me. Slowly and softly the half-opened gate was closed again. I walked away, retracing my steps as unobserved as possible through the village.

Here was Thorndale himself. Like most thoughtful men, he had much of the irresolution of Hamlet,—the irresolution that comes of thinking too much. There can be no doubt that in order to act slap-dash with promptness and decision, it is best not to see a case in all its bearings. It is best to see one side clearly and strongly: and then no lurking irresolution will retard the arm in its descent. Here was the secret of poor Thorndale's creeping away with a sinking heart from the only presence he cared for in this world. There is not invariable truth in the lines of Montrose,—

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his desert is small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
And win or lose it all.

We need not relate how the author explains his chancing upon Villa Scarpa in wandering about Naples. The villa was then deserted : all was over. We have no particulars recorded of Thorndale's death. We confess we feel in this omission something of cruelty on the author's part towards his hero. There is something pitiful in the story of the neglected manuscript-volume, found after the poor visionary was gone, hidden away in the roof of the abandoned house ; and in the picture which rises before us of the tender-hearted youth, lying down to die alone. He had a kind servant, indeed ; and an old friend, with his little adopted daughter, who reappeared as evening was darkening down, may be supposed to have tended and soothed the last agony. But Mr. Smith, in his careful avoidance of whatever might seem a clap-trap expedient to excite interest and feeling, is entirely silent as to the close. However, he chanced on the deserted Villa Scarpa : he found a despatch-box, bearing the name of Charles Thorndale, whom he had known, though not intimately. This despatch-box contained the manuscript volume already mentioned, which Thorndale seemed to have bequeathed to the first finder ; and the good-natured Italian to whom the villa belonged, willingly gave up box and manuscript to one who said he had been Thorndale's friend. We quote a single sentence, for its graceful beauty, from the picture of Thorndale called up to the mind's eye of his editor, on thus chancing on his last retreat :—

His eye was not that of which it is so often said that it looks through you, for it rather seemed to be looking out beyond you.

The object at which it gazed became the half-forgotten centre round which the eddying stream of thought was flowing ; and you stood there, like some islet in a river which is encircled on all sides by the swift and silent flood.

The manuscript volume now published has been divided by its editor into five books, and each of these into several chapters. Book I. is called *The Last Retreat* ; it is given to many reflections, mostly thrown out with little arrangement, upon the Sentiment of Beauty, and upon the two Futurities, the one on this side and the other beyond the grave. In Book II., which is called *The Retrospect*, the current of thought has set away into the past ; and we have an autobiographical sketch. Book III., called *Cyril, or the Modern Cistercian*, gives an account of the conflict of thought by which a companion passed from an evangelical Anglican to a Roman Catholic monk. Book IV., *Seckendorf, or the Spirit of Denial*, sketches the character and views of a friend who cavilled at the possibility of all human progress. In Book V., *Clarence, or the Utopian*, we first read how, as strength and life had well-nigh ebbed away, Thorndale met once more with an old friend of hopeful views, who seems to have stayed by him to the last : and when Thorndale's weak hand had laid down the pen for the last time, Clarence wrote out, in the last two hundred pages of the volume, his *Confessio Fidei* ;—a connected view of his theory of man, the growth of the individual consciousness, and the development of the human race.

The earlier part of the book is very desultory ; and the book as a whole appeals to a limited class of

readers. There will never be a rush for it to the book-club in the county town. Young-lady readers will for the most part vote it a bore : and solid old gentlemen of bread-and-butter intellect will judge Thorndale and his friends a crew of morbid dreamers, —though the book, amid sublimer speculations; sets out here and there much common sense on the affairs of practical life. But we trust that Mr. Smith may find an audience fit, and not so few. It elevates and refines the mind to hold converse with an author of his stamp. And how much the world must have gone through before such a character as Thorndale's became possible ! No appliance of modern luxury, no contrivance of modern science, says so much as the conception of such a character for the civilisation and artificiality of our modern life. Although the book is mainly dissertational, the reader will find in it much exquisite narrative, and much skilful delineation of character, in the history of the hero and his friends, their views and fates. Yet, while we cordially acknowledge in Mr. Smith a man of refined and pathetic genius, we should not be doing justice to ourselves if we did not say, that in all the views of life and society, whether hopeful or desponding, which are set out in the book, we have felt strongly a great blank and void. We believe, and we humbly hope we shall never cease believing, that Christianity shows us the true stand-point from which to look at man, and the true lever by which to elevate him. We believe that the same influence which has raised our hopes to 'life and immortality,' must and will elevate and purify this

mortal life. We believe that it is false philosophy to ignore the existence, power, and teaching of the Christian faith : and to take pains, before looking into the framework and the prospects of society, to exclude the only light which can search out the dark recesses, and dissipate the gloom that hangs before. Why should a man persist in wading through Chat Moss on a drenching December day, when the means are provided of flitting over it, light and warm and dry ? Why should we go up to Box-hill, and declare we shall dig our way through it with our own nails and fingers (being in haste) ; when we know that it has been nobly tunnelled for us already ?

The first book, entitled *The Last Retreat*, consists of disjointed fragments of thought, cast upon the page with little effort at arrangement. *All* these fragments are well worthy of preservation ; many of them are of striking originality and force. The dying man becomes aware that a peculiar beauty has been added to the beautiful scenes around him by the close approach of death. He says :—

I owe to death half the beauty of this scene, and altogether owe to him the constant serenity with which I gaze upon it. . . . Strange ! how the beauty and mystery of all nature is heightened by the near prospect of that coming darkness which will sweep it all away !—that night which will have no star in it ! These heavens, with all their glories, will soon be blotted out for me. The eye, and that which is behind the eye, will soon close, soon rest, and there will be no more beauty, no more mystery for me. . . . What an air of freshness, of novelty, and surprise does each

old and familiar object assume to me when I think of parting with it for ever !

There is no more of ennui *now*. Time is too short, and this world too wonderful. Everything I behold is new and strange. If a dog looks up at me in the face, I startle at *his* intelligence. ‘I am in a foreign land,’ you say. True, all the world has become foreign land to me. I am perpetually on a voyage of discovery.

Very true, very real, is this feeling, drawn from the much-suggesting Νύξ γὰρ ἔρχεται ! We really do enjoy things intensely, because we know we are not to have them long. And how well does experience certify that the most familiar scene grows new and strange to us when we are forthwith to leave it. The room in which we have sat day by day for years,—rise to quit it for the last time, and we shall see something about its proportions, its aspect, that we never saw before. The little walk we have paced hundreds of times,—how different every evergreen beside it will seem, when we pace it silently, knowing that we shall do so no more !

Here is an apt and happy comparison :—

When the lofty and barren mountain, says a legend I have somewhere read, was first upheaved into the sky, and from its elevation looked down on the plains below, and saw the valley and the less elevated hills covered with verdure and fruitful trees, it sent up to Brahma something like a murmur of complaint, ‘Why thus barren ? Why these scarred and naked sides exposed to the eye of man ?’ And Brahma answered, ‘The very light shall clothe thee, and the shadow of the passing cloud shall be as a royal mantle. More verdure would be less light. Thou shalt share in the azure of heaven, and the youngest and whitest cloud

of a summer day shall nestle in thy bosom. Thou belongest half to us.'

So was the mountain dowered. And so, too, have the loftiest minds of men been in all ages dowered. To lower elevations have been given the pleasant verdure, the vine, and the olive. Light, light alone, and the deep shadow of the passing cloud,—these are the gifts of the prophets of the race.

Thorndale felt strongly what every reflective man must feel, that the ordinary arguments for the immortality of the soul, drawn from the light of nature, are quite insufficient and unsatisfactory. It is upon entirely different grounds, and these grounds partaking often but little of the nature of argument, that the belief in the doctrine really rests. Still the argument fills the page ; and is appended to the doctrine much as in cheap Gothic buildings a buttress is added to a wall which does not need its support, because it at least looks as if it supported the wall. Thorndale's illustration is this:—

In old woodcuts one sometimes sees a vessel in full sail upon the ocean, and perched aloft upon the clouds are a number of infant cherubs, with puffed-out cheeks, blowing at the sails. The swelling canvas is evidently filled by a stronger wind than these infant cherubs, sitting in the clouds, could supply. They do not fill the sail ; but they were thought to fill up the picture prettily enough.

In truth, the usual arguments for immortality are quite futile : none more so than that founded upon the immateriality of the soul. The soul's immateriality is assumed to be proved by a manifest *petitio principii*, to use the logician's phrase. The soul is immaterial, we are told, because it thinks and feels ; and matter

cannot think and feel. But if the soul be material, why then matter *can* think and feel. Thorndale indicates as follows the foundation of his own belief:—

I think the contemplation of God brings with it the faith in immortality. The mere imperfections of our happiness here, our blundering lives and inequitable societies, our unrewarded virtues and unavenged crimes, our present need of the great threat of future punishments,—these do not, in my estimation, form safe grounds to proceed upon. They enter largely as grounds of a popular faith ; but it would be unwise to build upon them : because to rest on such arguments would lead us to the conclusion, that in proportion as society advances to perfection, and men are more wise and just, in the same proportion will they have less presumption for the hope of immortality.

We confess that we stand in no great fear of this last suggestion. There is little prospect, as yet, of this world becoming too good to need another. We need now, and we shall need for many a year, all the comfort and help we can draw from ‘the world that sets this right.’

Our readers will thank us for extracting the following passage :—

A fond mother loses her infant. What more tender than the hope she has to meet it again in heaven ? Does she really, then, expect to find a little child in heaven ? some angel nursing that she may eternally take to her bosom, fondle, feed, and caress ? Oh, do not ask her ! I would not have her ask herself. The consolatory vision springs spontaneously from the mother’s grief. It is nature’s own remedy. She gave that surpassing love, and a grief as poignant must follow. She cannot take away the grief : she half transforms into a hope.

It is indeed quite true, that in the attempt to define with precision the consolations and hopes which

Christianity affords us with respect to our departed friends, we sometimes only destroy what we desired to grasp. And it would be hard for us to say exactly how and in what form we hope to meet again the dear ones who have gone before us. Perhaps Archbishop Whately is right, when he suggests as one possible reason why revelation leaves the details so little *filled in* of the picture of immortality which it draws, that some margin may be left for the weakness of human thought and wish ; and that in matters beside the great essential centre-truth, each may believe or may hope that which he would love the best. And in the matter of a little child's loss, we know that two quite opposite beliefs have been cherished. For ourselves, it seems more natural to think of the little thing as it left us ; we believe that, in the case of most of us, the little brother or sister that died long ago remains in remembrance the same young thing for ever. Many years are passed, and we have grown older and more careworn since our last sister died ; but *she* never grows older with the passing years ; and if God spares us to fourscore, we never shall think of her as other than the youthful creature she faded. Still there is pathos and nature in Dickens's description, how the father and mother who lost in early childhood one of two twin sisters, always pictured to themselves, year after year, the dead child growing in the world beyond the grave, in equal progress as the living child grew on earth. And Longfellow, in his touching poem of *Resignation*, suggests a like idea :—

Day after day, we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air :
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken,
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her ;
For when, with raptures wild,
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child.

It is worthy of notice, how the death of little children has formed the subject of several of the most touching poems in the language. Only those could have written them who have children of their own ; and few but parents can fully enter into their pathos. We may remind our readers of Mr. Moultrie's best poem, *The Three Sons* ; of Mrs. Southey's (Caroline Bowles) beautiful picture of an infant's death-bed ; and in a volume lately published by Gerald Massey, natural feeling has kept affectation from spoiling a most touching piece, called *The Mother's Idol Broken*. And no one needs to be reminded of what it is that has afforded scope for the most pathetic touches of Dickens and Mrs. Beecher Stowe.

Thorndale puts a somewhat startling question as to the *extent* of the gift of immortality.

Why must I accept the alternative—all or none ? Why every Hun and Scythian, or else no Socrates or Plato ? Why must every corrupt thing be brought again to life, or else all hope be denied to the good and the great, the loving and the pious ?

Why must I measure my hopes by the hopes I would assign to the most weak or wicked of the race? Let the poor idiot, let the vile Tiberius, be extinct for ever: must I too, and all these thoughts that stir in me, perish?

Probably Thorndale was not aware that this notion, which he throws out on merely philosophical grounds, is one which, in a modified form, has been suggested, if not maintained, upon theological principles, by the most independent and original theologian of the age—we mean the Archbishop of Dublin. Dr. Whately has proposed it as a subject for inquiry, whether those passages of Scripture which describe the everlasting destruction of the finally impenitent, may not be justly interpreted as signifying their total annihilation; and thus, whether evil and suffering may not entirely cease to be in God's universe, not by an universal restoration of all things to the good and right, but by the total disappearance of that which has been marred past the mending? No doubt, there is something unutterably appalling in the thought of a soul in everlasting woe; no doubt, to our finite minds, it appears the most consistent with the divine glory and happiness, that a time should come when there should be no more pain, sin, and death, anywhere; but the Christian dares not add to or take from *that which is written*; and few, we think, can read the words even of the Saviour himself as bearing any other meaning than one. And as for the difficulty suggested by Thorndale, we confess we can discern in it very little force. It is a humble thing, always and everywhere, to be a man: whether the man be Plato or the Hun. We do not look for

immortality on the ground that we deserve it, or that we are fit for it. And although there may be truth in Judge Haliburton's bitter remark, that there is a greater difference between some men and some other men, than there is between these other men and some monkeys ; still, in looking down from the divine elevation, we believe that the distances parting the lowest and highest, the worst and best, must seem very small. Look down from the top of Ben Nevis, and the tuft of heather which is a dozen inches higher than the heather round it, differs not appreciably from the general level. Nor should it be forgotten, that in the lowest and the worst, there is a potentiality of becoming good and noble under a certain influence which philosophy does not know of, but whose reality and power we are content to test by the logic of induction. The coarse lump of ironstone is in its essence the selfsame thing as the hair-spring of a watch.

We pass to the second part of Thorndale's manuscript, *The Retrospect*, which will be much more interesting to ordinary readers than the first book. And here we find a graceful and beautiful sketch of the history of his life, from the dawn of consciousness down to the time when he came to Villa Scarpa to die. He was the happy child of a gentle and loving mother, over whom early widowhood had cast a shade of melancholy. His father he never knew. A poor lieutenant in the navy, he died of fever caught as his ship lay rotting off the coast of Africa. The mother's piety was deep, and her faith undoubting ; she knew nothing of the world beyond her own little daisied

lawn. And the remembrance of the prayer she early taught her child to utter, has inspired a passage which will come home to many hearts.

Very singular and very pleasing to me is the remembrance of that simple piety of childhood ; of that prayer which was said so punctually night and morning, kneeling by the bedside. What did I think of, guiltless then of metaphysics—what image did I bring before my mind as I repeated my learnt petition with scrupulous fidelity ? Did I see some venerable form bending down to listen ? Did He cease to look and listen when I had said it all ? Half prayer, half lesson, how difficult it is now to summon it back again ! But this I know, that the bedside where I knelt to this morning and evening devotion became sacred to me as an altar. I smile as I recal the innocent superstition which grew up in me, that the prayer must be said *kneeling just there*. If, some cold winter's night, I had crept into bed, thinking to repeat the petition from the warm nest itself, it would not do !—it was felt in this court of conscience to be ‘ an insufficient performance : ’ there was no sleep to be had till I had risen, and, bedgowned as I was, knelt at the accustomed place, and said it all over again from the beginning to the end. To this day, I never see the little clean white bed in which a child is to sleep, but I see also the figure of a child kneeling in prayer at its side. And I, for the moment, am that child. No high altar in the most sumptuous church in Christendom could prompt my knee to bend like that snow-white coverlet, tucked in for a child's slumber.

The mother early died ; and her brother, a baronet, who dwelt in a noble house standing in a fine old English park, adopted the desolate child as his own. Grand were the trees and fair the shrubberies of Sutton Manor ; but its great attraction to Thorndale was his little cousin Winifred. He loved her, he tells us, before he knew what love was, and long before he knew the vast worldly distance that parted even such

near relations. Lady Moberly, Winifred's mother, was a lady at once ultra-fashionable and ultra-evangelical. She was one of those of whom the sarcastic *Saturday Review* declared that the names of their great men must be written alike in the *Peerage* and in the *Book of Life*. Thorndale was shortly placed under the charge of a country clergyman, to be prepared for Oxford. Here he had one fellow-pupil, Luxmore, a youth passionately devoted to poetry. And his tutor's library furnished an endless store of poetry, theology, and philosophy, which were all devoured with equal avidity. When the vacation approached, Thorndale was somewhat surprised by receiving from Lady Moberly a formal invitation to Sutton Manor. He had counted, as a matter of course, upon spending the vacation there. But her ladyship was cautious; and her letter contained a postscript, cautioning Thorndale to beware of a certain fairy who haunted the shrubbery in which he was accustomed to walk. He learned the meaning of the postscript too soon. His cousin was more charming than ever; but his love, hopeless, yet unconquerable, was on his part 'a mere worship, where even the prayer was not to be spoken.' And this passion served to extinguish all ambition. He entered the cloisters of Magdalen, he tells us,

As indifferent to the world as any monk of the fourteenth century could have been. Academical honours, or the greater distinctions in life to which they prepare the way, had no sort of charm for me. The 'daily bread' was secured; and neither law, physic, nor divinity could have given me my Winifred.

A life of mere reflection, then, was to be his portion.

His over-sensitive mind never recovered the frost of that early disappointment. Is it too much to say that it results from the morbid body, from the weakness of physical nature, when trouble and sorrow, no matter how heavy, borne in early youth, cast their shadow over all after-years? What a vast deal a healthy man can 'get over!' True, as beautiful, are the words of Philip van Artevelde, in Mr. Taylor's noble play:—

Well, well,—she's gone,
And I have tamed my sorrow. Pain and grief
Are transitory things, no less than joy,
And though they leave us not the men we were,
Yet they do leave us. You behold me here,
A man bereaved, with something of a blight
Upon the early blossoms of his life,
And its first verdure,—having not the less
A living root, and drawing from the earth
Its vital juices, from the air its powers:
And surely as man's health and strength are whole,
His appetites re-germinate, his heart
Re-opens, and his objects and desires
Shoot up renewed.*

How many twice-married men and women can testify to the truth of Artevelde's philosophy! Out of a romance, it takes very much to kill a man—unless, indeed, consumption has marked him from his birth, and his physical constitution lacks the reacting spring. But Mr. Smith has made his hero feel and act just as it was fit under the conditions given. He became a solitary dreamer; and though feeling the attraction

* Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde*, Second Part, Act iii. Scene ii.

which draws the moth to the flame, yet at vacation times, instead of going to Sutton Manor, he betook himself to Wales or Cumberland, to 'read.' There he read, thought, wrote, destroyed. He mused deeply on the constitution of society: he longed for a time when manual labour should not be deemed inconsistent with refinement and intelligence. But he found his theory crumble at the touch of fact:—

As I marched triumphantly along, I came to a field where men were ploughing. I had often watched the ploughman as he steps on steadily, holding the share down in its place in the soil, and felt curious to try the experiment myself. This time, as the countryman who approached me had a good-natured aspect, I asked him to let me take his place within the stils. He did so. I did not give him quite the occasion for merriment which I saw he anticipated; I held down the share, and kept it in its due position. But I had no conception of the effort it required—which, at least, it cost me. When I resigned my place, my arms trembled, my hands burned, my brain throbbed; the whole frame was shaken. And something, too, was shaken in the framework of my speculations. The feasibility of uniting with labours such as these much of the culture we call intellectual, was not so clear to me as it was an hour ago. I walked along less triumphantly, maintaining a sort of prudent silence with myself.

Thorndale all over! Easily driven by some little jar, even from a cherished purpose or belief. All physical constitution again. In the days when manual labour and mental cultivation are combined, men like Thorndale must be watchmakers and printers: men with more bone and sinew must go to field-work. But who does not remember the diary of Elihu Burritt, when teaching himself half-a-dozen languages, with its constantly-recurring entries of 'Forged twelve hours

to-day'—'Forged fourteen hours to-day'—the brawny blacksmith, with his fore-hammer and his Hebrew lexicon side by side?

Very frankly and without reserve, Thorndale shows us how his opinions on society swayed to and fro. He went to see Manchester, and mourned to think how, 'for leave to live in habitations, where air and light, beauty and fragrance, are shut out for ever, men and women are toiling as no other animal on the face of the earth toils.' And, caring little for conventional proprieties, he sits down in London on the steps of a church—it was in Regent Street—amid the offscourings of the population, and contemplated society from this new point of view. It looked very different! He heard the stifled mutterings of the deadly hate which the very lowest class bear to those above them. The ground underneath us, in truth, is mined: the mine is charged. Is not the hatred *natural*? We do not ask whether it be right.

Without a doubt, we of the pavement, if we had our will, would stop those smooth-rolling chariots, with their liveried attendants (how we hate those clean and well-fed lackies!), would open the carriage-door and bid the riders come down to us!—come down to share—good heaven! what?—our ruffianage, our garbage, the general scramble, the general filth.

Walking another day down Regent Street, he passes an open carriage standing at a shop door. Seated alone in it is—Winifred! He avoids recognition, and hurries away. Soon he slackens his speed—stops—turns, walks back, slowly, rapidly, breathlessly! The carriage was gone. True to the life!

He left Oxford at last, and returned to Sutton Manor. 'It was the old story of the moth and the flame.' He resolved that for a month his heart should have its way; and rowing with Winifred on the river, wandering with her in the shrubbery, watching the sun go down, he had his 'month of elysium.' All his philosophy was in those days full of hope. He wondered at the greatness of the human *capacity for happiness*. At length he broke hurriedly away, and hastened to Loch Lomond. We have already seen how he returned, and with what result.

Then he became a wanderer. He tells us he never ceased to think, but 'a despondency crept from his life into his philosophy.' He went to Germany, Switzerland, Italy—the accustomed route—and learned to appreciate the diversity there is in human life. On the banks of the Lake of Lucerne he met his Utopian friend, Clarence, whom he had known at Oxford; and they spent long days in varied talk together. Clarence dwelt much upon the misery of the better or the middle classes. He thought it exceeds that of the poor wretches on the Regent Street steps. What ceaseless and life-wearing anxiety and care there are in the hearts of most educated men! Clarence did not wonder that men go mad. As life goes against them, as the income proves insufficient, as the expenses increase, as impending calamity ever jars miserably upon the shaken nerves, and as the mind is day by day racked by ceaseless fears, the only wonder is that Reason does not oftener forsake her seat, totter, and fall!

On some futile pretence of seeing his friend, Luxmore, the poet, Thorndale returned to England. Luxmore had published, and failed. Thorndale found him in a Special Pleader's office, studying for the bar. Luxmore held steadily to his books of Practice, till, in an evil hour (he had parted with all his poets), he bought at a stall a cheap edition of Shelley. It awakened the old spirit. He would emigrate. He would clear the forest and the jungle. He would grow corn by the Mississippi. But he must see the South American mountains first; and so he sailed for Rio Janeiro. Thorndale greatly doubted to the last whether he had ever 'worked his way round' to the farm he had talked of. Luxmore's character and career are ably and skillfully sketched; but we cannot say that we are especially struck by the specimens given of his poetry.

In the great steamer, as it lay off Southampton, Thorndale bade his friend farewell. He had loved him, he tells us, as a brother, and an elder brother. Thorndale's pliant nature was plastic in those robust hands. Sadly depressed, he betook himself to a little cottage at Shanklin, once more alone but for the old companion—the box of books. It was Thorndale's especial misfortune that, with a native craving for some attached companion to dwell under the same roof, he was by circumstances always doomed to days of solitude. But a new interest now arose. Symptoms of disease, disregarded in the excitement of the last days with Luxmore, now forced themselves on his attention. Some business matter compelled him to write to his uncle, thus informing his relations at Sutton Manor, for

the first time, that he had returned to England. Kind messages and regrets came in reply : Winifred especially chiding him for his unsocial habits. It seemed 'a wild strain of irony.' Yet the few lines she wrote wakened old feelings, never quite asleep. Surely she would come and see the poor invalid ? So strong did the impression grow, that, catching sight one day of a female figure in the garden, bending over the flowers, he felt sure it must be Winifred ; and watched breathlessly, with violently-beating heart, till she turned her face, and the delusion was dispelled. Still, for days he cherished the vain expectation that she would come, and restore him, by her very presence, to life, and hope, and faith. *That* was all he needed.

If I could see thee, 'twould be well with me !

Now there came consultations with this and that great physician : and soon the death-warrant decidedly expressed. Then was a first moment of confusion and agony ; and then followed an indescribable calm. It was now all smooth water before him. He betook himself to his last retreat at Villa Scarpa ; but he did not see Winifred before he left England for ever. Kind letters followed him from her mother. Lady Moberly would come over to take care of him, with a doctor in either hand. Of course she never came. And now the last days are gliding over swiftly :—

The day is never long. I have, indeed, ceased to take note of the measurement of time. One hour is more genial than another ; thought flows more rapidly, or these damaged lungs breathe somewhat more freely at one time than another : but where the

present hour stands in the series which makes up day and night, what the clock reports of the progress of time, I have ceased to ask myself. There is but one hour that the bell has to strike for me.

Yet life is not quite over, even after Thorndale has found his last harbour of refuge. Present incident proves the completion of past remembrance. The Third Book of the manuscript volume is entitled, *Cyril; or, the Modern Cistercian*.

In watching a little point of beach which was visible from his terrace, Thorndale had often been struck by the figure of a youthful monk, wearing the white habit of the Cistercian order, who passed slowly by the sea-margin, and sometimes paused in thought. Thorndale had constructed a whole theory of his thinking and history, and began to feel towards him as towards a friend. At length, in his ride, Thorndale passed two monks, one of whom had sunk exhausted by the wayside. He conveyed the monk to the monastery in his carriage, and recognised in him the Cistercian so often watched. A further surprise awaited him. On entering the Cistercian's cell, he recognised in him an old acquaintance—Cyril. Cyril had entered the Roman Catholic Church, through the gate of the monastery. He had sought a peaceful, pious, and harmonious life within those walls; and he assured Thorndale that he had found all he sought. His history had been a tragical one. Brought up in a pious family, he had been assailed by sceptical doubts. His father was an enthusiast for reformatory punishment. The house was full of books on the subject. And from these

Cyril imbibed the notion that one grand end of all punishment should be the reformation of the criminal himself. To punish for mere revenge was unchristian and irrational. How, then, of God's punishments inflicted in a future life? The pious father appeared to claim for the human legislator principles more noble and enlightened than those he attributed to the Divine. *Eternal punishment* aims not at the reformation of the guilty. Cyril was plunged into all the miseries of doubt. And brought up in the conviction that unbelief was the extremest sin, his anguish was indescribable. He became restless, gloomy, morose. And so, leaving Oxford, Thorndale left him. Thorndale was at Dalgelly, in Wales, when he learned that Cyril was at Barmouth, and rode over to see him. He met him, just come off the water. Cyril's joy at the meeting was extreme. They sat cheerfully down to supper. Cyril never had been so gay. At length, absently, he drew from the pocket of his rough great coat a large mass of iron, the fluke of an old anchor. At the sight of it, suddenly recollecting himself, he burst into a violent flood of tears. He confessed to his friend that an accident only had prevented him from throwing himself into the sea, during the sail from which he had just returned. He had gone out with that purpose, driven to it by his agony of doubt, and (strange as it may seem) by the fear of death. His fear of death was such, that he longed to make a plunge and have it over. And amid all the misery of his scepticism, he says, surely with sad truth,—

I am quoted by my family and my friends as a monster of

impiety and guilt. I am frowned upon, avoided, expostulated with—and pious ministers reprove me—for intellectual pride!

We can well believe that a pious father or mother, deeply loving their son, would yet rather see him laid in his coffin than see him turn doubtful of their own simple faith. What malady makes a breach so total—what leads to a doom so fearful—as unbelief? But let it be remembered that in many cases it is a malady: a disease for which a man is no more guilty than for consumption or for typhus. No doubt there is a wilful blindness, a preference of falsehood to truth, a flippant, hateful self-sufficiency, in the case of some: and let these be held responsible. But surely there *are* earnest spirits, battling for the truth—shedding tears of blood because they cannot believe, though they long to do so. Let us be thankful that in almost every such case the disease is a temporary one. It will wear away. ‘Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness.’ Unbelief is a crisis which must be passed through by the thinking human mind, as certainly as measles and hooping-cough by the human body. Of course a blockhead, who never thinks at all, will not be troubled by it. The humble and earnest man comes out of it, with a faith grounded so deeply that it can never be shaken more. Let us pity, then, the young doubter: let us aid him by God’s blessing: let us not accuse him, and so perhaps drive him to despair. The guilty unbelief is that of the man who knows in his conscience that he would rather not believe. There is another kind of want of faith which the Almighty will not condemn. It is that which utters the creed

and the prayer together: 'Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief.'

The next morning Thorndale and Cyril were to have breakfasted together. But when Thorndale went to his lodgings, he was gone, without a word; and they met no more till they met in the Cistercian monastery.

After this meeting, Cyril sometimes visited Thorndale at the Villa Scarpa. Thorndale did not seek any account of the process by which the youth who could believe nothing, had passed into the monk who believed everything. No doubt it would have been the usual story of reaction commenced, and then a positive *appetite for belief* growing upon the mind. In any case, belief had brought Cyril peace and rest. And the doctrine of purgatory had been to him a favourable distinction of the Church of Rome. *It* represented a reformatory nature even in punishment beyond the grave; and the young enthusiast fancied that a special revelation had been vouchsafed to him by the Saviour, that every soul that God has made should in some way be saved at last. And coming not frequently, stealing quietly up to the terrace with his *pax vobiscum*, Cyril visited Thorndale to the last. But Thorndale saw the Cistercian on the strip of beach no more.

Cyril had felt the difficulty which most thoughtful men must feel, as to what conception should be formed of God:—

How personify the Infinite? I said to myself. Does not the notion of personality itself imply contrast, limitation, and must not a person be therefore Finite? or how personify at all, but by borrowing from the creature, and framing an ideal out of human qualities?

At one moment my conception of God seemed grand and distinct, and my whole soul was filled and satisfied with it. Suddenly I was startled and abashed when I traced in it too plainly the features of humanity. These I hastened to obliterate; and the whole image was then fading into terrible obscurity. I remember one day our common friend Luxmore saying, in his wild poetic manner, that the ordinary imagination of God was but the shadow of a man thrown upwards—the image of our best and greatest, seen larger on the concave of the sky.

We remark upon this, that Luxmore, after all, was only stating in a poetical and somewhat exaggerated form, a great and fundamental religious truth. We are ‘created in the image of God:’ and it is only because there is something in us which resembles God, that we are able to form any conception of Him and His character. But for this we could no more conceive of God’s attributes than a blind man, who never saw, can conceive of colour. We, of course, are fallen creatures; and our blurred and blotted qualities bear only the faintest and farthest likeness to that Divine Image in which we were made. And further, it is true enough that when we kneel down to pray, we should only distract and dishearten ourselves by trying to form a conception of a Being in whose nature there are such elements as eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence, invisibility; and by trying to feel that we are addressing *Him*. But was Luxmore entirely wrong when he said that the Hearer of prayer, to our weak minds, draws personality from a sublimed humanity? It is not a fable, that we know the picture of a man’s character and life set out in a certain simple story, Glad Tidings to all to whom it comes: a man towards whom we can

feel kindly sympathy and warm affection: a human being like ourselves: and we are told that He is 'the image of the invisible God:' that when we picture Him to our hearts, we picture God—softened, but not degraded. We can see 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:' and in praying to God, we can feel as though the kind face were bent over us as we pray,—as though we were telling of our wants and sorrows to that kind and gentle heart. Do we desire to think clearly to whom we speak when we pray? We are chilled and overwhelmed when we think of infinite space and infinite time: it is not to an aggregate of such qualities as *these* that we can address heartfelt pleading. Let us think we are speaking to a sympathising Man; and child-like, we can bend down our head upon the knee of Jesus of Nazareth, and breathe into his ear the story of our wants and woes. We have all that the grossest idolatry ever gave of clear conception; and yet our worship is not degraded, but sublimed.

Not so pleasing is the Fourth Book of Thorndale's manuscript, entitled *Seckendorf, or the Spirit of Denial*. Long ago, in Switzerland, Thorndale found Seckendorf in the studio of Clarence, the Utopian artist. Seckendorf was a tall man, with grey hair and keen grey eyes, and advanced in years. He was by birth a German baron; but he was known in England as Doctor Seckendorf, an eminent physician and physiologist. In philosophy, he was just the opposite of Clarence: sceptical, sarcastic, hoping nothing. His philosophy was 'firm as a rock, and as hard and

barren.' He held that what is excellent never can be common, because 'higher excellence is greater complication, and its manifestation must be more restricted, because a larger number of antecedent conditions are necessary for that manifestation.' The Utopian's 'good time coming' of universal goodness and happiness could therefore never be. And Thorndale thought out a sad induction of facts in corroboration of the thing :

There is more sea than land ; three-fourths of the globe are covered with salt water.

There is more barren land than fertile ; much is sheer desert, or hopeless swamp ; great part wild arid steppes, or land that can only be held in cultivation by incessant toil.

Where nature is most prolific, there is more weed and jungle than fruit and flower.

Of the animal creation, the lowest orders are by far the most numerous. The *infusoria*, and other creatures that seem to enjoy no other sensations than what are immediately connected with food and movement (if even these), far surpass all others in this respect. The tribes of insects are innumerable ; the mammalia comparatively few.

Of the human inhabitants of the earth, the ethnologist tells us that the Mongolian race is the most numerous, which is not certainly the race in which the noblest forms of civilisation have appeared. As in the tree there is more leaf than fruit, so in the most advanced nation of Europe there are more poor than rich, more ignorant than wise, more automatic labourers, the mere creatures of habit, than reasoning and reflective men.

We do not know whether the celebrated anonymous work, entitled *The Plurality of Worlds*, was published before Thorndale's death. If he had read it, he might have gathered from its eloquent and startling pages one

instance more for his induction. He might have stated that there seems strong reason to believe that of all the orbs which have (if we may say so) blossomed in immensity, only one has arrived at fruit : that this earth is the only inhabited world in all the universe. The Creator works with a lavish hand. But as his works grow nobler, they grow fewer. Scarcity, we all know, makes a thing more valuable : the converse holds as truly, that value makes a thing scarce.

The second chapter in this Fourth Book treats ingeniously and strikingly of the power of money, and also furnishes proof that Thorndale, like many men of his make, was not minutely accurate. The chapter is called *The Silver Shilling*, and over and over again we have *the silver shilling* repeated, as the type of money. Seckendorf tells us where he got the name ; it was from ‘a poem by one Phillips, “On the Silver Shilling.”’ We know, of course, what Seckendorf is referring to ; but there is no such poem as that he quotes. Most men who are tolerably well read in the poetry of the seventeenth century, have at least heard of John Phillips’s poem, *The Splendid Shilling*, an amusing parody of the style of Milton : it sets out thus :—

Happy the man, who, void of care and strife,
In silken or in leathern purse, retains
A Splendid Shilling : he nor hears with pain,
New oysters cried, nor sighs for cheerful ale.

Our shortening space forbids our offering our readers any account of Seckendorf’s career, which Mr. Smith sketches with great liveliness and interest ; or our

noticing the topics which were discussed in council by Thorndale, Clarence, and Seckendorf. Seckendorf thought there is a general movement in England towards the Roman Catholic Church; and that it is not unlikely that the ragged urchin who is chalking up 'No Popery' on the walls of London, may live to see High Mass performed in St. Paul's Cathedral. He maintained that fear is the root of all religion; the unseen root, even in the happiest Christians: that 'the pillars of heaven are sunk in hell.' We differ from him. We think that love and hope, rather than fear, are the guiding influences in the Christian life. We believe that though a great fear may be the thing that wakens a man up from total unconcern about religion, yet that the race once entered on, he treads 'the way to Zion with *his face thitherward*;'—looking towards the home he seeks; and drawn by the hope before, rather than driven by the fear behind him.

Thorndale's Fifth Book is called *Clarence; or, the Utopian*. As the invalid was wearing down from day to day, one morning he was sitting in the gardens of the Villa Reale. There a group drew his attention—a father, and, as it seemed, his little daughter. The father was evidently an Englishman; the little girl, with fair complexion and light hair, had the dark eye of the Italian. Thorndale recognised his old friend Clarence; but with characteristic reserve, he shrunk from making himself known. But he looked with kind feeling upon the little child; and mused, as Dr. Arnold had done before him, on a child's power to reawaken a parent's flagging interest

in life. The beaten track is no longer monotonous ; the circle of the year looks new. Thorndale thus mused :—

What beautiful things there are in life ! joys that have come down to us pure and unstained from the times of the patriarchs. It is to me an eternal miracle to see the same roses year after year bloom as freshly as they did in Paradise. Plant this wedded happiness, plant these roses, in every rood of ground, ye who would improve the aspect of this world ! but do not think you can change a single leaf of the plant itself.

Thorndale's idea had been anticipated. James Hederwick, a pleasing but overlooked poet, thus excuses a new poem on the old theme of *Love* :—

The theme is old—even as the flowers are old,
That sweetly showed
Their silver bosses and bright-budding gold
Through Eden's sod ;—
And still peep forth through grass and garden mould,
As fresh from God !

Happily Thorndale and Clarence met at last. The little girl, compassionating the wan look of the consumptive, offered him another day some flowers. Clarence followed her ; and suddenly recognising his old companion, 'burst into tears like a woman.' He and his little Julia were afterwards constant visitors at the Villa Scarpa ; and all the beauty of the scene, which had been paling to the dying man's languid eye, suddenly revived. Morning after morning Clarence spent, painting the view from Thorndale's terrace. Julia was not his daughter ; she was his adopted child.

She was the daughter of an exiled Italian patriot who had come to England, married an English woman, settled down quietly in a little cottage on the borders of the New Forest, and supported himself as a sculptor. In a chapter called *Julia Montini*, the story of the exile, his wife and child, is related with exquisite grace and pathos. Very beautifully did the simple and untaught English girl tell Clarence how, as there gradually grew upon her the sense of the genius and refinement of the man she had married, she feared that he would cease to love her, so much above her as he was. She read and studied, hoping to make herself more worthy of him : but her fear proved idle ; he never loved her less. It is indeed something of a disappointment for a husband to feel there are realms of thought to which *he* has access, but into which a gentle and loving wife cannot enter with him : but solitude is the penalty which attaches of necessity to elevated thought. The man who climbs too high, leaves common sympathy behind him. Our readers may remember how beautifully the author of *In Memoriam* has anticipated the poor young wife's thoughts and fears :—

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star :
He seems so near and yet so far :
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.
For him she plays, to him she sings,
Of early faith and plighted vows ;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him dark and wise :
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
' I cannot understand : I love.'

Suddenly the sculptor and his wife died of fever ; and Clarence found the little child all alone in the deserted cottage. The quiet home, that had looked so happy, was obliterated at a stroke. Is it a morbid thing, if we find it for ourselves impossible to look at any happy home, without picturing to our mind a day sure to come ? We look at the cottage in the sunshine, amid its clustering roses, and with children's voices by. Ah, some day there will be an unwonted bustle—straw flying about the neat walks—empty, echoing rooms—the children gone—and the peaceful home broken up for ever. It is well for those who can feel themselves secure, even if they be not safe.

And now Clarence and Julia soothe the dying man's solitude. Thorndale lies on his sofa under the acacia-tree ; Clarence stands near, painting ; Julia is busy gardening. And as Thorndale's hand turns too feeble to hold the pen, Clarence takes up his abandoned manuscript volume, and fills the remaining leaves with his own confession of faith. To notice *that* at all adequately, would demand an article of itself ; and we shall not attempt to do so. But we see our last of Thorndale as we have just described him. We leave him, now with very little to come of life, under the acacia-tree. There is now only the stillness of expectation, upon that terrace that looks down upon the bay.

We should have been happier, we confess, had we

left him with something better to support him at the last than philosophy, whether cynical or Utopian. Surely he had within himself, too sacred for common talk, a hope and a belief not to be paraded for Seckendorf's sarcasm! Surely, when, in the last hours, the pictures of childhood came back, the perplexed and tempest-driven man was again the child that prayed by the little white bedside. We do not care if our readers should complain that the sermon peeps through the article—that the disguise of the reviewer does not quite conceal the gown and band. Let it be so: but in treating of such grave matters as those which this book suggest, we could not have forgiven ourselves had we failed to notice the book's essential defect. Holding the belief which we hold, we could not have written of the mystery of life, without reference to that which alone can read it.

IV.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.*

WE sincerely regret that we are compelled to begin our notice of so amiable a man and so pleasing a poet as James Montgomery, by speaking in terms of decided protest of the manner in which his biography has been written. This biography is the most striking specimen of book-making with which, even in these days of preposterously extended biographies, we have happened to become acquainted. The story of a quiet life singularly devoid of incident has been spun out into seven closely-printed volumes, by the pure incompetence and impertinence of its writers. It was quite fit that some permanent record of Montgomery's life should be prepared: his poetry has real merit and distinctive characteristics which entitle him to such a memorial; though had the life of Mr. Popkins run a similar course, most assuredly it would

* *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of James Montgomery; including Selections from his Correspondence, Remains in Prose and Verse, and Conversations on various Subjects.* By John Holland and James Everett. Seven Volumes. London: 1854-6.

The Poetical Works of James Montgomery. Collected by himself. In Four Volumes. London: 1849.

not have been worth recording. Still, one of the seven volumes we have toiled through might properly enough have been given to a memoir, written with moderate discrimination, of the author of *The World before the Flood*, *The Pelican Island*, and *The Common Lot*. But Messrs. Holland and Everett had for once got hold of a subject likely to have some interest for educated people, and they resolved to make the most of it; and, if possible, to associate their own utterly insignificant names with the respectable name of Montgomery. Mr. Everett gives us, at the beginning of the third volume, a picture of his own peculiar features; and Mr. Holland, if possible a more singular-looking individual, figures at the beginning of the fifth, in one of those white neckcloths with long limp ends which are indissolubly associated with the memory of Mr. Stiggins. The characteristics of the biography are faithfully mirrored in these two countenances, so redolent of self-conceit and vulgarity. We do not hesitate to say that Messrs. Holland and Everett are wholly incapable of writing a biography. Their main determination in this work appears to have been to cover as many pages as possible. It seems to have been Mr. Holland's system to cram himself from some cheap and popular manual, and then, with the information thus easily acquired, to come down upon Montgomery, and note down the 'conversations on various subjects' which ensued. Mr. Holland, of course, is the great man in most of these; and he has preserved them quite in the Boswell style. We have abundance of such lively and memorable dialogues as the following

‘imaginary conversation:’—HOLLAND—‘Sir, did you ever see a whale?’ MONTGOMERY—‘No, I never saw a whale.’

Whenever Montgomery said anything particularly weak and silly (which we regret to find he often did), Mr. Holland hastened to chronicle it as a valuable relic. Montgomery had a tendency, it appears, to write extremely long and very prosy, not to say twaddling, letters; and an immense number of these is given, almost all possessing not the slightest interest. Then Montgomery was for many years editor of a Sheffield newspaper; and in that capacity, as Mr. Holland tells us, ‘the great and important events which have been significantly called “The Wars of the French Revolution,” were consecutively chronicled and commented upon by him;’ and of course this is good reason why in his biography all these ‘great and important events’ should be chronicled and commented upon again. Montgomery was accustomed to go about speechifying at Sunday-school and Bible Society meetings; and no doubt all these speeches served a useful purpose at the time; but surely there was no occasion to preserve a great number of them in his *Life*, the more especially as they have really no merit at all save that of earnestness and simplicity. But the biographers have thought fit to put on record a vast deal of the washy stuff which the good man was wont in his failing days to talk in the vestries of dissenting meeting-houses, and at Sheffield local charities.

We have no doubt at all that Messrs. Holland and Everett thought they were producing a book very like

Mr. Forster's delightful *Life of Goldsmith*. They explain that it is their purpose to set forth the 'Life and Times of James Montgomery;' and accordingly we have nearly as much about Montgomery's friends (Messrs. Holland and Everett being always in the foreground), as about Montgomery himself. But unhappily, all these friends appear to have been the most wearisome and uninteresting of mortals. At the first glance, we might be surprised that Montgomery did not choose acquaintances of a different stamp; but the fact ceases to be remarkable when we remember that till late in life his position in society was not such as to afford him any selection; and when we discern in his character many indications of such weakness and silliness as prepare us to believe that he would take a pleasure in being surrounded by toadies and flatterers. No doubt he found such in Messrs. Holland and Everett: though the former in the preface to this work insinuates a graceful compliment to himself and his fit coadjutor, in the statement that 'the biography of such a man demands some literary and religious qualifications resembling his own.' Mr. Holland's grammar is imperfect; still, the meaning of the sentence may be gathered. And it does really appear that Montgomery was on a footing of intimacy with these two men: Mr. Holland tells us that rarely a week, generally only a day or two, passed without their meeting. And for many years before Montgomery died, Messrs. Holland and Everett were accumulating materials for this valuable work. Through all this period the purpose 'was never lost sight of:'

and we are told that the poet tacitly approved it. 'To suppose that he himself had no suspicion of such a design, especially amidst the unguarded conversation of later years, would be to attribute to him the absence of even an ordinary degree of perspicacity.'* And the result of the entire process is before us in these seven volumes. The stupidity of Messrs. Holland and Everett is such, that they seem really to think that they are magnifying their friend, when they set him before us as such a weak, twaddling, oversensitive, and silly person, that we heartily regret we ever read his *Life*—written, at least, by such incapable hands.

The book sets out with a history of the noble family of Montgomerie through the chivalrous ages: the reason for introducing this in the *Life* of Montgomery being, that he was not in any way connected with that family. His parents were Irish: and they came to reside at Irvine, in Ayrshire, so immediately before the poet's birth, that he was accustomed to say that 'he had very narrowly escaped being an Irishman.' But Eglinton Castle, the residence of the Earl of Eglinton, is within a few miles of Irvine: the name of the Eglinton family is Montgomerie; and accordingly the biographer tells us that 'there seems nothing very improbable in the supposition that he may have had a common progenitor with that illustrious branch of the family.' But Montgomery himself, when asked

* Mr. Holland's mind is evidently not metaphysical, nor are his expressions precise. The *absence* of a quality is not generally regarded as an *attribute*. But this is a trifle.

to mention any of his relations, gave a list of names less known to fame :

Holland—Did you ever know any of your relations of that name? [*Montgomerie.*] *Montgomery*—No; our relations were the *Spences*, the *M^cMullins*, and the *Blackleys*.

It is really too bad that one ‘than whom,’ Mr. Holland tells us, ‘there did not exist an individual of any “celebrity,” who was less of a tuft-hunter, or who so *really* recognised and habitually acted upon a well-known *dictum*, that CHRISTIAN is the highest style of man,’* should be made ridiculous by his biographers’ snobbish attempt to claim kindred for him with a noble family.

The poet’s father was a Moravian preacher; accordingly, we are favoured with a history of the Moravians, their doctrines, and persecutions. The most remarkable circumstance about this primitive people is their odd manner of contracting marriages. It is decided *by lot* what ‘brother’ shall marry such a ‘sister:’ and this system has been submitted to for several centuries.† *Montgomery* told a story as to a certain Mr. Hutton, a great man among the Moravians :

George III. was fond of him; and on one occasion the King, who liked a joke, said, in his dry way, ‘Mr. Hutton, I am told that you Moravians do not select your wives, but leave it to your ministers to choose for you—is it so?’ ‘Yes, please your Majesty; marriages amongst the Brethren are contracted, as your Majesty will perceive, after the fashion of royalty.’

* Preface to vol. vii. p. 8. The typographical peculiarities are Mr. Holland’s.

† Vol. i. p. 22.

The specimens which are preserved of Montgomery's *bon mots* are such, that it is clear that had Sydney Smith ever come in contact with him, that distinguished wit would have met his match. We give some witticisms, culled with care :—

As Montgomery never wore any trinket, jewel, or personal ornament of that kind, we were amused one day by his exhibiting on his finger a *galvanic ring* (such as were then common, being made of a rim of zinc and copper), *archly remarking*, '*that as it had been placed there by a lady, he dared not remove it!*'

June 4, 1822. Mr. Everett accompanied Montgomery on an excursion to Mansfield. The Hope coach left Sheffield at half-past seven in the morning—an early hour for the poet. He was however ready to the minute; and watching the guard place a large watch in its receptacle, '*There,*' says he, '*is his time, locked up like a turnspit dog in a wheel, to run its round, and do its work!*'

Then, for an example of wit and presence of mind conjoined :—

Mr. Robert Montgomery, from Woolwich, while walking out with the poet, came *suddenly* upon a field of flax in full flower—beautifully blue. 'Brother, what sort of corn is that?' inquired the stranger. '*Such corn as your shirt is made of!*' was the PROMPT reply.

On one occasion, Mr. Holland

was accosted by a gentleman, *sotto voce*, with the startling enquiry, 'Do you know that Mr. Montgomery is married?' 'Certainly not,' was the reply; 'why do you put such a question?' 'Because,' said the gentleman, 'there is a letter in existence which I am told proves the fact.' That letter is before us: it begins thus—'My dear friend—In a gloomy humour, I wrote the preceding trifle a few days ago. You will learn from it a secret, which I have hitherto withheld even from you and all my friends in Sheffield, namely that *I am married!*'

To cut short Mr. Holland's story, the *trifle* was a copy of very poor verses, in which Montgomery mentions that he was *married to the Muse*. In such brilliant and novel *jeux-d'esprit* did the worthy man indulge.

Our readers would not forgive us, if we failed to record the following remarkable incident :—

Coming into Mr. Holland's room one day, it was evident that something had tickled the poet's fancy. On being asked how he was :—*Montgomery*—‘Wait till I have *recovered my breath*, and I will tell you. You have noticed the immense piles of stones which your friend, William Lee, the surveyor of highways, has laid up yonder for paving the streets?’—*Holland*—‘Yes, sir.’—*Montgomery*—‘Well, I was coming along, in a most melancholy mood, when the sight of these stones, in connexion with a sudden fancy, so amused me, that I think the incident has really done me good. I thought that when our surveyor dies, the epitaph originally made for Sir John Vanbrugh would, with the alteration of a single word, be exactly suitable for the worthy Sheffielder :—

Lie heavy on him earth, for *Lee*
Laid many a heavy load on thee!’

Montgomery, notwithstanding *this pleasant sally* on the name of Mr. Lee, was *as ready as any one* to admit the value of the public services of one through whose official superintendence Sheffield might fairly claim to be regarded as one of the best paved, as well as the best drained, towns in the kingdom.

We can recal a parallel instance of wit to Mr. Montgomery's jokes, from the writings of Mr. Dickens. Mr. Peter Magnus said to Mr. Pickwick, ‘You observe the initials of my name; P.M.—*Post Meridiem*? In familiar notes to intimate acquaintances, I occasionally sign my name “Afternoon.” It amuses them, Mr. Pickwick.’ Mr. Pickwick, we are told, bowed;

and rather envied the facility with which Mr. Magnus's friends could be amused.

Of the value of Mr. Montgomery's critical opinion we are enabled to judge by the following incident. Speaking of some preacher of whom we never heard before, he said :

There was, among other striking passages in his prayer, one *very fine sentiment*. 'God save the king, let not his greatness perish with him in the dust, but let him be great before thee!' *That is of the very essence of the sublime!*

If this be 'of the very essence of the sublime,' so, we presume, must be the following passage, from a leading article written by Montgomery in his newspaper, after Napoleon's death :

He is dead ; Buonaparte is dead ; and *we promised to furnish his epitaph*. It shall be brief ; it shall be the only epitaph worthy of him,—

‘BUONAPARTE,’

his name, as it is written in his mother tongue, and unclipt by French flippancy.

Although it is evident from the biography, *passim*, that the people of Sheffield, including Montgomery, had an idea that their town was in all respects superior to any other of modern times, it is pleasing to observe that the poet's mind was comparatively free from provincial prejudices. We find the following important passage in a speech delivered by him at the founding of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, to a report of which Messrs. Holland and Everett give eleven pages of their book :

Sir, *I have never pretended*, nor could I be guilty of *such sophistry and falsehood* as to insinuate that *Sheffield can boast of poets, historians, and philosophers to rival those of Greece and Rome !!!*

Modest and candid old gentleman ! Still he had his faults, for what says Mr. Holland ?

Posterity will no doubt be a little surprised, should I ever take it by the button, and say, ‘ Mr. Montgomery was a smoker ! ’

And he had a bad habit of throwing his letters violently about :

Montgomery called on Mr. Holland, and placing in his hand an envelope ; ‘ See,’ said he, ‘ there is a genuine autograph of Wordsworth. That is such a letter as one feels pleasure in receiving : not like *these* ; neither of which are worth a farthing, in any way ; ’ at the same time *casting the two impertinents violently upon the floor, as we have seen him do with similar epistles in other instances.*

The fact is important, still the anecdote is incomplete. It was wrong in Mr. Holland to leave us in suspense as to whether Montgomery left the ‘ impertinents ’ lying upon his floor, or before leaving picked them up and re-pocketed them.

Notwithstanding the enormous length of this biography, there is a total absence in it of anything like clearness and completeness of presentment of the life, character, and daily habits of the man. Whoever desires to have a vivid picture of the individual Montgomery, must piece it together for himself, from detached hints and imperfect statements gathered up here and there in unexpected nooks of the huge mass

of verbiage of which these volumes consist. Before we go on to sketch out the story of Montgomery's life, we should like to give our readers some notion of the great features of it during by far the longer part of its continuance.

For nearly fifty years, beginning when he was little more than two-and-twenty, Montgomery was editor, proprietor, printer, and publisher of the *Sheffield Iris* newspaper. He lived an odd kind of frowzy life, over a bookseller's shop, in one of the dirtiest streets of Sheffield. He was never married; but he lived all that time with three respectable women, who kept the bookseller's shop already mentioned, and whom he regarded as his sisters, though they were not in any way related to him. We form a very kindly impression of them; and after the smirking impudence of Mr. Holland's portrait, we turn with great satisfaction to that at the beginning of vol. vi., which shows us the pleasant homely features of Sarah Gales. Every evening, in the company of these worthy individuals, Montgomery smoked a single pipe. He was very fond of cats: he had always at least one pet of that race, which in the evening was wont to leap up into his lap and share his tea. From nervousness or indolence, he never could shave himself. Unlike most men who write much, to whom

The fair undress, best dress, which checks no vein,

is an essential both of comfort and of progress in their work, Montgomery always wrote, at every period of his life, when fully dressed in outgoing attire. The

habit was probably acquired in his early days of editorship, when he sat in a room which opened into the shop, and always thought it necessary to appear in person to receive advertisements and orders of all kinds. He was keenly sensitive to cold, and went about shivering in a thick great-coat, even in the dog days. He was fairly educated, but had not the faintest claim to scholarship. He never was on the Continent; and but once in Scotland, and once in Ireland, in the last seventy years of his life. His newspaper began with a large circulation, being erected on the ruins of another put down by Government prosecution; and at first his political views were extreme enough, but they became more and more moderate; he had not the *push* and energy needful for the conduct of a popular newspaper, and though his journal—a weekly one—was always respectably conducted, its circulation latterly grew small. He had no reporter; he rode about and collected accounts in person. He had a feeble frame, an over-sensitive mind, spirits almost equally depressed, a most sincere and amiable heart. Intense honesty, guileless simplicity, humble and unaffected piety, were characteristic of James Montgomery. His poetry we shall estimate hereafter: his prose was very prosy indeed; his conversation in no way remarkable. In his letters and speeches he had an inveterate tendency to say everything in the greatest possible number of words. He was a true philanthropist; wealth and energy were all he wanted to have been another ‘Man of Ross.’ He was weak, no doubt, in many respects; but we do not wonder that all who knew him loved

him. His poetry breathes a serene and simple piety, and he was as good as he wrote. But we have gathered from these seven volumes all that is worth recording of Montgomery's life, and we proceed to give our readers a sketch of it.

On the coast of Ayrshire, ten miles north of Ayr, in a flat, sandy, uninteresting country, stands the ugly town of Irvine. There James Montgomery was born, on the 4th November, 1771. Much of the Ayrshire coast is very bold and striking; but for miles on either side of Irvine, the coast, and the country for a mile or two inland, is weary sand. So Montgomery was drawing on an imperfect recollection when he described his native shore as either rugged or romantic:—

The loud Atlantic ocean,
On Scotland's rugged breast,
Rocks, with harmonious motion,
His weary waves to rest;
And gleaming round her emerald isles,
In all the pomp of sun-set smiles.
On that romantic shore,
My parents hailed their first-born boy;
A mother's pangs my mother bore,
My father felt a father's joy.*

The poet's father, John Montgomery, was born at Bally-Kennedy, in a parish bearing the euphonious name of Ahoghill, in the county of Antrim. His mother, Mary Blackley, was a native of the same place. They had four children—three sons, of whom James was the eldest, and a daughter, who died before the poet's birth.

* *Poetical Works*, vol. ii. p. 166.

John Montgomery became a preacher among the Moravian Brethren, and was appointed minister of a small congregation at Irvine, where he remained for several years. The Brethren's church had, and has, but few members in Scotland, and after John Montgomery left Irvine, his congregation became extinct, and his humble chapel was turned into a weaver's shop. When his more distinguished son, at the age of well-nigh fourscore, revisited Irvine, he went to see the chapel where his father had preached. He found it thus desecrated—but there he enjoyed a foretaste of posthumous fame: he saw a tablet, which had been inserted in the wall, bearing an inscription that under that roof had been born James Montgomery, the poet. And although he had left Scotland with his parents at the age of four years, he recognised the features of the place. He remembered especially two large stone balls at the entrance to the gaol, placed there—he had been told—that the heads of malefactors might be knocked against them at entering.

On leaving Irvine, Montgomery's parents settled at Grace Hill, a Moravian settlement in the parish of Ahoghill; and here the poet received the first rudiments of education from Jemmy McCaffery, the parish schoolmaster. When he was seven years old, his father took him to Fulneck, in Yorkshire, where were a Moravian settlement and school. In 1783, John Montgomery and his wife went as missionaries to the West Indies, and their two younger sons, Robert and Ignatius, were sent to join their brother at the Brethren's school at Fulneck. When any Moravian minister devotes himself

to the missionary work, his children are adopted and maintained by the brotherhood.

The Moravian establishment at Fulneck consisted of a handsome range of buildings, in a pleasant retired situation, and looking upon a rich country. Fulneck is about six miles from Leeds. The air is salubrious; and the land attached to the institution, originally a tract of rough moorland, has been brought to fertility by the labours of the Brethren. The school was an excellent one; and its fame attracted many pupils whose parents were not of the Moravian community. Here James Montgomery remained during ten years, 'distinguished for nothing but indolence and melancholy.' His odd appearance and over-sensitive temper made him a mark for the ridicule of his more vigorous companions; and here he laid the foundation of that shrinking, morbid disposition which went with him through life. He was very pale, very near-sighted, had 'an abundant supply of carrotty locks,' and a scorbutic taint in his blood thus early manifested itself. *Robinson Crusoe* was the work which fired his youthful fancy; though even so innocent a work of fiction was tabooed by the stern discipline of the Brotherhood.

On being interrogated what first led him to court the Muses, Montgomery replied,—'The master one day took several of the children out, and read Blair's *Grave* to them behind a hedge. My attention was strongly arrested, and a few lines made a powerful impression on my mind. I said to myself, if ever I become a poet, I will write something like this. I afterwards resolved, oddly enough, that I would write a *round poem*: this notion was perpetually in my head, an idea of *round* being my idea of perfection.' This he illustrated by referring to a glass

globe, which was smooth and entire; that anything added to it might augment its size, but would never add to the perfection of its rotundity; while anything taken from it would be destructive of its globular form, and so far of its perfection. 'I remember,' he said, 'as well as if it was but yesterday, how I leaned upon a rail as I stood on some steps at Fulneck, and deeply and silently mused in my mind on the commotion which would be produced upon the public by the appearance of this *round poem*.'

Montgomery's first poetical efforts were imitations of the rude ungrammatical old Moravian hymns. By the time he was thirteen, he had filled a book with these. His instructors carefully guarded their pupils from contact with books which they regarded as improper. So vigilant were they, that the father of one of the boys having sent to the school a volume of selections from Milton, Thomson, and Young, consisting, as he supposed, of some of their finest moral and religious sentiments, it was carefully examined, and pruned of its unprofitable passages, before the masters suffered it to fall into the hands of the boys. And on reaching them, it was found seriously mutilated, many leaves cut out, and others in a mangled state. The usual result followed from this extreme severity of discipline. Montgomery fell in with an extract from *Hamlet* :—

We were of course prohibited from reading the entire play; and that very prohibition created in me the most ardent desire to see the whole; nor did I ever rest till I had read it.

The ten years Montgomery lived at Fulneck were spent in monastic seclusion from the world. 'I do not recollect,' he says 'having once during all that time conversed for ten minutes with any person what-

ever, except my companions, our masters, and occasional Moravian visitors.' There seems to have been much simple piety among the children; an amusing example is given:—

It was customary for the boys of different classes to take tea with each other. One day the beverage was changed; and when the boys had all partaken, they formed a circle hand in hand, and sung a hymn. One of the least was then placed in the centre of the ring, to officiate in prayer. He knelt down and said, 'O Lord, bless us little children, and make us very good. We thank thee for what we have received. *O bless this good chocolate to us, and give us more of it!*'

Notwithstanding the prohibitions of his superiors, Montgomery gradually became acquainted with many of the English poets. Poetry was his passion thus early. Cowper was the first 'whole poet' he had seen; but he did not care for Cowper's poetry; he 'thought he could do better himself.' Before he was fourteen, he wrote a mock-heroic poem of 1000 lines. He began a poem called *The World*, which he intended should outvie Milton on his own domain: and contemplated a long work on the history of Alfred, in a series of Pindaric odes. An event which occurred at this time made a great impression on his mind, and was often recurred to by him in after years. The eccentric Lord Monboddo, on visiting Fulneck, was taken by the Moravian bishop to the school, and the names of several boys mentioned to him. The old judge paid little attention till the bishop said, 'Here, my Lord, is one of your countrymen.' On this Monboddo started, and flourishing a large horsewhip

over Montgomery's head, cried out, 'I hope he will take care that his country shall never be ashamed of him.' 'This,' said Montgomery, 'I never forgot; nor shall I forget it while I live: I have, indeed, endeavoured so to act that my country might never have cause to be ashamed of me.'

The poetic boy became silent and abstracted, to the great annoyance of the good Brethren, who had hoped to have made him a Moravian minister. The school diary contains several unsatisfactory entries about him: Under May 2nd, 1787, we find, 'Complaints that J. M. was not using proper diligence in his studies, and was admonished on the subject;' and 'on July 3rd, 'As J. M., notwithstanding repeated admonitions, has not been more attentive, it was resolved to put him to a business, at least for a time.' J. M. was accordingly placed with a small shopkeeper at Mirfield, near Fulneck. He remained behind the counter for a year and a half, writing poetry and composing music; and finally, on Sunday morning, the 19th June, 1789, he ran away, with three-and-sixpence in his pocket. 'I had just got,' he tells us, 'a new suit of clothes, but as I had only been a short time with my good master, I did not think my little services had earned them. I therefore left him in my old ones.' And thus, at the age of sixteen, set out James Montgomery to begin the world.

On the evening of the second day he reached the hamlet of Wentworth; and here he conceived a plan for recruiting his lessening finances. He knew that Earl Fitzwilliam's residence was near. Having fairly

copied out a little poem he had composed, he proceeded to Wentworth Park, and after waiting a while, espied his lordship riding through his domain. With great agitation he presented his poem to the kind-hearted nobleman, who read it upon the spot, and forthwith presented a golden guinea to the gratified author. In a few days Montgomery was established as shopman to Mr. Hunt, who kept 'a general store' at the pretty village of Wath, near Rotherham, where he sold 'flour, shoes, cloth, groceries, and almost every description of hard and soft ware.' The kind brethren at Fulneck sought to persuade the prodigal to return to them, but Montgomery was resolute, and at Wath he remained a year, 'remarkably grave, serious, and silent,'—'a slender youth, shrinking from the cold, and still more from contact with the villagers generally, who regarded him with a mysterious interest, as being sure "no vulgar boy."'

At Wath, Montgomery became acquainted with a neighbouring bookseller, who encouraged his taste for literature. At the end of a year he sent a volume of manuscript poetry to Mr. Harrison, the publisher, of Paternoster Row, and a week after followed in person. We have no particulars of his first journey to London, but we are told that Mr. Harrison gave Montgomery a situation in his shop, though he declined to print the young poet's volume. Montgomery retained his quiet disposition. While in London he never entered a theatre, nor ever visited the British Museum; 'he had no curiosity,' he tells us, 'for such things.' He first saw himself in print in an Edinburgh weekly publica-

tion, entitled *The Bee*, where, in November, 1791, appeared a tale by him, called *The Chimera*, of little merit. He next wrote a novel, in imitation of Fielding, which he offered to Mr. Lane, the publisher. Lane read the work, and offered Montgomery twenty pounds for it, provided he would re-write it: 'for,' said Lane, 'you swear so shockingly, that I dare not publish the work as it is.' 'This,' said Montgomery, long after, 'was like a dagger to my heart, for I never swore an oath in my life, nor did I till that moment perceive the impropriety of making fictitious characters swear *in print*, as they do in Fielding and Smollett.' The novel was again offered to Lane long afterwards, and refused; and in after life its author often expressed his thankfulness that things were so ordered.

But in the meantime the disappointment was a bitter one, and Montgomery resolved to return to Yorkshire. He accordingly entered once more upon his shopman life at Wath. Meanwhile, in 1790, his mother died at Tobago, and was followed in a few months by his father. They had been conducting the Moravian Mission there for seven years. Their simplicity and piety appear to have been beyond all praise, and there is something very touching in the way in which the good missionary wrote to the Brethren of Fulneck, recording the death of his wife, whom he was so soon to follow. On November 10th, 1790, he wrote:—

With a heart deeply affected, I must inform you that it has pleased the Lord to take my dear wife home to eternal rest, on the 23rd of October. Her illness was a fever, which lasted seven days. In the beginning no danger was apprehended; but on the

fifth day the physician expressed some fears. I asked her whether she was going to leave me alone in this island? She replied, 'Indeed I should wish to remain longer with you, knowing how much you want my assistance; but the Lord's will be done.'

He himself died on the 27th June following. A brother missionary wrote of him :—

He fell happily asleep, as a ransomed sinner, rejoicing in God his Saviour, upon whose atonement he rested all his hopes, and now seeth him face to face in whom he believed, and of whose cross and death he bore many testimonies before whites and blacks.

A less feeling heart than the poet's would have cherished the remembrance of parents so early parted and so sadly lost, and we are not surprised to learn that, till the end of his long life, Montgomery was accustomed very frequently to speak of them in terms of warm affection.

My father, mother—parents now no more !
Beneath the lion-star they sleep,
Beyond the Western deep :
And when the sun's noon-glory crests the waves,
He shines without a shadow on their graves ! *

At the age of twenty-one, Montgomery, being still Mr. Hunt's shopman, took up by accident one day the *Sheffield Register*, a newspaper published by a Mr. Gales, and there read an advertisement for a clerk in a counting-house in Sheffield. That advertisement formed the turning-point in the poet's history. He

* *Poetical Works*, vol. ii. p. 166.

found it was Mr. Gales himself who stood in need of a clerk ; and in a few days he was domesticated with him in that house in a busy thoroughfare called ‘The Hartshead,’ which was to be his home for five-and-forty years. Mr. Joseph Gales of Sheffield was printer, bookseller, and auctioneer ; also editor and publisher of the newspaper just mentioned. Montgomery said publicly in 1845 that there was not perhaps in the world a more lonely being than himself when, on a dark Sunday evening, he crossed the Ladies’ Bridge, and walked up the market-place towards his future home. At that time Sheffield had only one-fourth of the population which Montgomery lived to see it contain.

It was the future poet’s business to make himself generally useful in his new situation. He attended Mr. Gales to act as clerk at the sales where he presided as auctioneer, and attended in the book-selling shop. Here he became acquainted with the *Pleasures of Memory*, the proof sheets of which were given him by a young man, a compositor in the printing-office, who had assisted while in London in ‘setting up’ the first edition of Mr. Rogers’s pleasing work. Politics ran high in Sheffield, as elsewhere, about the year 1792. Mr. Gales was a vehement partisan ; and Montgomery, who regarded his master as ‘a generous, upright, and noble-minded’ man, very naturally came to feel ‘every pulse in his heart beating in favour of the popular doctrines.’ On the 8th of April, 1793, Mr. Gales occupied the chair at a reform meeting held on the Castle-hill, which sent up a

petition to the House of Commons expressed in terms so disrespectful that the House refused to receive it. Montgomery gradually began to write some political papers in the *Register*, concerning which he afterwards said, with tears, that when he wrote them 'he had been one of the greatest fools that ever obtruded himself on the public notice.' A royal proclamation having appointed the 28th February, 1794, to be observed as a general fast, the 'Friends of Peace and Reform' at Sheffield chose to honour the day after their own fashion, by holding a large public meeting, at which, after a prayer delivered by 'Billy Broomhead,' and a 'serious lecture' by 'Neddy Oakes,' a hymn, written for the occasion by Montgomery, 'was sung in full chorus' by the assembly, consisting of several thousand persons. A series of violent party disturbances followed; and on one occasion, it being understood that the authorities contemplated some interference with Mr. Gales, a band of 'a hundred stout democrats' guarded his house for a day, singing 'God save great Thomas Paine' to the national air. But government suspicion—not without some reason—fell upon Mr. Gales, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. He fled to America, whence he did not return, and the *Sheffield Register* went down.

By this time Montgomery had been two years in the office; he had acquired the confidence of the Gales family; he had latterly been writing a good deal in the newspaper; and now, in conjunction with a certain Naylor, he announced a new weekly paper, the *Sheffield Iris*. Thus rapidly had he passed from more

than cloister quiet to the bustle of a position the very last that might have been anticipated for one of his shrinking nature—that of editor and publisher of a Radical newspaper in stormy times. On July 4th, 1794, the first number of the *Iris* was published, on ‘peace and reform’ principles. How little suited was his sensitive spirit for party strife and business cares we learn from his own declaration made at the period—‘I hate politics, and would as soon meet a bear as a ledger.’ He knew that the eye of the government was upon him, which is not to be wondered at, if it was true, as his biographers tell us, that ‘his paper was the organ, and his office the rendezvous, of the disaffected party.’ A month after Montgomery had started on his own account occasion was found for coming down upon him.

One day a ballad-singer came to his shop, and asked if he might have six quires of a certain ballad printed. Montgomery glanced at the ballad, which appeared innocent, and agreed to give the poor man what he wanted for eighteenpence. Two months afterwards Montgomery was taken into custody on the charge of having printed and published a seditious libel respecting the war then waging between his Majesty and the French government. The ballad he had printed, which was entitled *A Patriotic Song, by a Clergyman of Belfast*, contained the following verse:—

Europe’s fate on the contest’s decision depends ;
Most important its issues will be ;
For should France be subdued, Europe’s liberty ends ;
If she triumphs, the world will be free.

Montgomery was held to bail, and was tried at

Doncaster in January, 1795. Everything about the proceeding was made as oppressive as possible. The enlightened jury found that 'James Montgomery, printer, being a wicked, malicious, seditious, and evil-disposed person, and seditiously contriving, devising, and intending to stir up and excite discontent and sedition among his Majesty's subjects, and to alienate and withdraw the affection, fidelity, and allegiance of his said Majesty's subjects,' &c. &c. &c., 'did publish the said libel.' Montgomery was sentenced to suffer three months' imprisonment in York Castle, and to pay a fine of twenty pounds. Poor Montgomery was at this time just three-and-twenty. At this date we need not hesitate to call the entire proceeding a scandalously oppressive one. Half a century afterwards the poet came into possession of the papers, including the *brief* for the prosecution. In that document it is stated that 'this prosecution is carried on chiefly with the view of putting a stop to the meetings of the associated clubs in Sheffield.' Thus were things done in the grand old days when Eldon was Attorney-General.

In literary occupation the time of imprisonment soon passed away; and at its close Montgomery resumed his work at the *Iris* office. Soon after he became sole proprietor of the journal. But further ills awaited him. On occasion of one of those disturbances which were too common at Sheffield at that period, the military fired upon the people. The circumstances were described in the *Iris* in terms which the commanding officer regarded as levelled at himself. A second time did the luckless editor experience justice's justice, being sen-

tenced, after a tedious prosecution, to six months' imprisonment in York Castle, to pay a fine of thirty pounds, and to give security for good behaviour for two years. Montgomery had been racked with anxiety while the matter was in suspense, but his spirits became more cheerful when he found himself in his old quarters. By his gentleness he won the regard of all the officials of the prison; and he beguiled the tedium of confinement by writing a small volume of poetry, which was published in the following year (1797) under the title of *Prison Amusements*. It is pleasant to record that the poet *lived down* the enmity of prosecutors and justices: some of those who had been most eager for his punishment upon both these occasions lived to know him better, and to become his fast friends.

Montgomery's work at the *Iris* office now went on quietly in the course in which it was to run for many succeeding years. He thus describes his workshop:—

From the room in which I sit to write, and in which some of my happiest pieces have been produced, all the prospect I have is a confined yard, where there are some miserable old walls and the backs of houses, which present to the eye neither beauty, variety, nor anything else calculated to inspire a single thought, except concerning the rough surface of the bricks, the corners of which have either been chipped off by violence or fretted away by the weather. As a general rule, whatever of poetry is to be derived from scenery must be secured before we sit down to compose.

From this *sanctum* Montgomery was always ready to emerge when a customer entered the shop; and an occasional relaxation was found in long rides for the

purpose of getting payment of accounts due to him. On one such occasion he mistook a private house for an inn, had his horse taken care of, and sat down to dinner with the family without invitation. The awkwardness of the bashful poet when he discovered his mistake may be imagined.

The romance of Montgomery's life was early over. A girl named Hannah—the surname is unknown to us—had attracted his admiration while he lived at Wath. In the *Iris* of August 29, 1801, appeared, without any signature, a poem with the title, *Sacred to the Memory of Her who is Dead to Me*. Some time after it was reprinted in a volume of Montgomery's poems, under its present well-known title of *Hannah*. His friends in after years often endeavoured to learn from him how far the story is to be regarded as a true one, but he always shrunk from the subject. It appears beyond question that Hannah was, in Montgomery's history and memory, a humbler version of poor Goldsmith's *Jessamy Bride*.

In 1805 Montgomery wrote *The Grave* and *The Common Lot*, his first poems indicative of great ability. The latter was destined to an almost unequalled popularity. It was written upon his thirty-fourth birthday. His first long poem, *The Wanderer of Switzerland*, was published in 1806. So little importance did he attach to it that it was three years passing through his own press, being proceeded with only when the types were not more profitably engaged. It has always appeared to us, we confess, a very washy production; still it passed rapidly through two editions of five

hundred copies each. Soon after its publication the poet visited Fulneck for the first time since he quitted it for the counter; and on this occasion he wrote his pleasing little poem, *Departed Days*. *The Wanderer of Switzerland* was favourably noticed in the *Eclectic Review*; and at the request of Mr. Parken, the editor, Montgomery became a regular contributor to that periodical. For several years almost all its articles were written by Parken, Montgomery, and John Foster. One of the poet's first papers was a slashing criticism of Moore's early poems. Writing to Parken, he says:—

I can assure you I have done my best—that is, my worst—to condemn this profligate volume according to the strictest justice. I endeavoured to admit the full merit of the author's talents, while I did not spare one hair of his demerits as a libertine in principle, and a deliberate seducer in practice.

Montgomery's critical papers exhibit him rather as a good pious man of a fine honest spirit than as a powerful writer. About this time, from conscientious scruples, he left off theatre-going, and also ceased attending a club which he had frequented almost every evening for several years, at too great an 'expense of time, conscience, and self-respect.' He became more decidedly pious than heretofore, and began to attend a Methodist chapel regularly. He was by no means of a sectarian spirit, and, in his latter days especially, testified much affection for the church. A third edition of *The Wanderer of Switzerland* having been published by Messrs. Longman, the poem attracted the notice of

Jeffrey, and was severely commented upon in the *Edinburgh Review*. We give an extract :—

We took compassion upon Mr. Montgomery on his first appearance, conceiving him to be some slender youth of seventeen, intoxicated with weak tea and the praises of sentimental ensigns, and tempted, in that situation, to commit a feeble outrage on the public, of which the recollection would be sufficient punishment. A third edition, however, is too alarming to be passed over in silence; and though we are perfectly persuaded that in three years nobody will know the name of the *Wanderer of Switzerland*, or any of the other poems in this collection, still we feel ourselves called on to interfere to prevent the mischief that may arise from the intermediate prevalence of so distressing an epidemic. Mr. Montgomery is one of the most musical and melancholy fine gentlemen we have descried on the lower slopes of Parnassus. He is very weakly, very finical, and very affected.

In a letter to his friend Mr. Aston, Montgomery says that ‘he had been wounded perhaps as deeply by these envious and pitiful slanders as the critic intended.’ And to Parken he writes—‘The *Edinburgh Review* made me miserable beyond anything that the malice and tyranny of man had been able to inflict on my sensibility or my pride.’ A long season of depression followed, though the sensitive poet was cheered by the praises of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Scott. Mr. Bowyer, of Pall Mall, proposed to commemorate the abolition of the slave-trade in 1807 by the publication of a series of engravings, representing the sufferings of the slaves, accompanied by an illustrative poem. This he asked Montgomery to contribute; and in the spring of 1809 the *West Indies* appeared in a five-guinea quarto volume, accompanied by one or two

pieces by other authors. This poem, afterwards published in a cheaper form, attained a large circulation: a friendly critic told its author that its earnestness and vehemence 'give to the versification something of the character of loud speaking.' Cowper was at this time Montgomery's model. Roscoe wrote of the *West Indies* that 'he was delighted with its simplicity and pathos, no less than with its poetical ornament and spirit.'

In 1813 appeared *The World before the Flood*, the most popular of Montgomery's long poems. One Sunday morning, he tells us, before starting to his usual place of worship, he happened to be meditating on the history of Enoch. At the same time a passage in the Eleventh Book of *Paradise Lost* occurred to him, in which Milton describes Enoch's translation. Instantly an idea flashed upon him; and in a few months the plan thus suddenly conceived was elaborated into a poem of four cantos. By the advice of Roscoe and Southey, the poem was re-written, and after great labour was brought to its present form in ten short cantos. It at once became known. It was favourably noticed in many periodicals; and in two years four thousand copies were sold in England alone.

Montgomery now began to take that interest in religious schemes which he manifested through the remainder of his life. He thus provoked the enmity of some of his former political friends, who said that he 'had ceased to be an advocate of the poor, further than as respects their *souls*, and in that we have not a more bigoted advocate in the country, because it is much *cheaper* to feed *them* than *the other*.' He was

fond of attending the 'May meetings;' and on a visit to London in May, 1812, he heard Campbell and Coleridge lecture at the Royal Institution. In 1813 he partook of the Sacrament for the first time, having hitherto had conscientious scruples as to his fitness. And in this year Mr. Everett first saw him; and 'gazed upon him with inexpressible delight, while purchasing a volume of his poems.'

In November, 1814, at the age of forty-three, the poet applied for re-admission to the communion of the Moravian Church at Fulneck, from which he regarded himself as an apostate. The reply he received is rather startling. The Rev. C. F. Ramftler writes, 'I will not delay informing you that in our Elders' Conference to-day *our Saviour approved* of your being now re-admitted a member of the Brethren's Church.'

But as Fulneck was forty miles off, Montgomery's connection with the church there was merely nominal, and he continued to attend the Methodist chapel at Sheffield. In pp. 78-80 of vol. iii. we have an account of the solitary occasion on which the poet *preached*. He appears to have much delighted his audience; and we presume that a layman officiating in this manner is not deemed a breach of ecclesiastical order among the Methodists. Becoming more strict in his notions of duty, he now refused not only to sell tickets (as he had been accustomed to do) in the State Lottery, but to insert advertisements relating to it.

In 1819 was published the missionary poem of *Greenland*, in which Montgomery celebrated the labours of the Moravians in that bleak country. On

the death of George III. he wrote a copy of verses, containing a graceful tribute to the memory of that weak but good old man. And the *Songs of Zion*, a collection of religious poetry, appeared soon after. In this collection was first published that beautiful little poem entitled *Prayer*, so popular among all classes of professing Christians. Two or three years later Montgomery edited the *Climbing Boy's Album*, the purpose of which was to call attention to the sufferings of the children engaged in chimney-sweeping. Montgomery's best contribution to this work is its Introduction, beginning with the lines—

I know they scorn the climbing boy,
The gay, the selfish, and the proud :

and ending with the vigorous verse,

Yes, let the scorn that tracks *his* course
Turn on *me*, like a trodden snake ;
And hiss, and sting me with remorse,
If I the fatherless forsake.

All this while the circulation of the *Iris* was diminishing, and the poet was longing to get out of harness. The paper was very ill printed, the same fount of long primer having been used for twenty years. An opposition journal, professing more liberal politics, was started in 1819. Montgomery's shrinking nature was not suited for a position better fitted for men of the mark of Messrs. Slurk and Pott. After negotiating with several parties, Montgomery finally sold the *Iris* to a Mr. Blackwell, a retired Methodist preacher ; and on September 27th, 1825, the last number under the poet's

régime was published, with a farewell address from the editor. A public dinner was given him on his birthday, the 4th November, 1825. It was attended by a hundred and sixteen gentlemen, of every shade of politics, under the presidency of Lord Milton—all eager to testify their esteem for one who needed only to be known to be respected and beloved. An elegant inkstand of Sheffield manufacture was presented to him; and the people of Sheffield offered him a tribute yet more graceful by subscribing funds to establish in the island of Tobago, where his parents had died, a mission-station bearing the name of *Montgomery*, which at the present day contains about 1,400 adults and as many children. ‘With God’s blessing upon the preaching of his gospel by his servants there,’ said the pious poet, in 1840, ‘may it perpetuate, to the end of time, the memory of those sainted relatives who left that name to me.’

Now set free from business cares, Montgomery gave his time to literature and works of benevolence. He went about making speeches at religious meetings in the neighbouring towns, sometimes going as far as Liverpool and Chester. His friends kept him busy. On one occasion we find him speaking at six Bible meetings between Friday and Monday. He was a leading man in all town matters, and took a chief part, in the interest of the church, at a stormy and scandalous church-rate meeting held in the parish church at Sheffield. He was invited to meet Moore at Stoke Hall; but a needless scruple led him to decline, thinking that he ought not to ‘write with severity against the immoral doctrines of the Anacreontic poet, and afterwards meet him at the

social board as if nothing of the sort had happened.' During this period Montgomery wrote *The Pelican Island*, which was published in August, 1827. The idea of this poem had been floating in his mind for nearly ten years. He prided himself upon the unintelligibility of its title: 'I defy all the heads into which the thought of poetry ever came to guess the plan or anticipate the issue, even while they are reading, before it is all developed; and yet nothing can be more simple, gradual, and natural.'

In February, 1828, appeared a widely circulated notice of the publication of 'Montgomery's new poem, *The Omnipresence of the Deity*.' All readers of Macaulay's *Essays* are well aware that this work was written by Mr. Robert Montgomery, afterwards author of *Satan, Luther*, and other trashy writings. The Sheffield poet was much annoyed at a mode of advertising calculated to lead to the supposition that this 'new poem' was written by himself, and the discreditable subterfuge led to the *Omnipresence* being bought, if not read, by many who would assuredly not have become possessed of anything avowedly by Mr. Robert Montgomery. A London evening paper reviewed the poem as James Montgomery's, and several booksellers ordered copies of the book under the same impression. In 1834, in the *Quarterly Review*, there was a flattering notice of *The Common Lot*, to which the following note was appended:—

The Common Lot, by the poet Montgomery. We mean, of course, the individual properly designated Montgomery, and properly also designated the poet; not the Mr. Gomery who

assumed the affix of 'Mont,' and through the aid of certain newspapers has coupled his name with other additions not less factitious.

Upon this Mr. Robert Montgomery wrote to James Montgomery a letter, calling this passage from the *Quarterly* 'infamously false and disgustingly malignant,' and requiring the poet to 'address a line to Mr. Lockhart, and insist on my not being slandered in order to gild your name.' To this extremely absurd request the poet sent a long reply, declining to accede to it, advising patience and forbearance, and concluding with the very sensible remark that all confusion would have been avoided had the publishers of 'Montgomery's new poem,' 'Montgomery's *Satan*,' &c., employed 'the simple prefix of *Robert* to a name already known with another antecedent.'

In May, 1830, Montgomery read a course of lectures on *The History of English Literature* at the Royal Institution, which made no striking impression. And in the same year he published a large work, a *History of Missionary Enterprise in the South Seas*. Like Thomas Moore, he was alarmed at the passing of the Reform Bill: and indeed his political views had now (his biographers inform us) become what might be called moderately Conservative. A pension of £150 a year, given him by Sir Robert Peel in 1835, to the extreme indignation of the Radicals of Sheffield, may not have been without its effect. On a subsequent visit to London he 'considered it becoming to pay his respects personally to Sir Robert,' who received him with great kindness, and invited him to dinner. On this occasion

he met several men of note, among them his early friend Chantrey ; and he was delighted by the ‘old English cordiality’ of the Bishop of London, who ‘shook him heartily by the hand in a manly manner, not finically offering him two fingers, after the manner of some persons.’ Rogers invited him to dinner, but the invitation was with characteristic principle declined, as it was for a *Sunday*. He met Horace Twiss, who immediately asked him, ‘Are you the Montgomery who wrote *The Common Lot* ? It is one of the finest compositions in the language.’ ‘It has, indeed,’ replied the poet, ‘had the *uncommon* lot of being highly praised.’

In 1835 he declined the office of Professor of Rhetoric in the University of Edinburgh. Mrs. Hofland writes as follows of his appearance at this time :—

Nature has rendered him the very youngest man of his years ever beheld. Had he not been known to the world as a poet for thirty years, he might at this very time pass for thirty ; such is the slightness of his figure, the elasticity of his step, the smoothness of his fair brow, the mobility and playfulness of his features when in conversation.

Montgomery had lived for more than forty years in the house in the Hartshead which had received him on his first coming to Sheffield. Three daughters of his old employer, Mr. Gales, lived with him, and kept a bookseller’s shop. From this they retired in 1836, on the death of one of the sisters ; and Montgomery, along with the two survivors, removed in that year to the ‘Mount,’ a handsome pile of building, ‘comprising eight genteel dwellings, and situate on an eminence about a mile and a half west from the centre of the

town.' In March he went to Newcastle to deliver six lectures *On the British Poets*, for doing which he was paid £45, and from this time forward he added something to his income by similar engagements. In this year also appeared the first uniform edition of his *Poems*, in three volumes. It had a large sale. A copy of the book was sent to Wordsworth, who replied promptly and gracefully. In 1837 one of the Misses Gales died, leaving Sarah the sole survivor. The deceased had been for a long time in a fretful and ailing state; and Montgomery wrote feelingly, that 'neither of patience nor good nature had he much to spare, being in continual need of both for home consumption.'

The 'Penny Postage' was not regarded as a boon by Montgomery, as it multiplied the number of his correspondents in an annoying degree. He was pestered by multitudes of young ladies to write in their albums, —a request he never failed to comply with. One cool lady wrote to him, saying that she had heard a great deal of his poetry, and would like to read it; and that as she could not afford to buy a set, she wished him to *give* her one. The good-natured poet at once complied with the extortionate demand.

In 1841, being then seventy years old, he revisited Scotland for the first time since he had left it, sixty-five years before. Along with Mr. Latrobe, he held a number of meetings in various towns, at which he raised above £600 for the Moravian missions. The poet was received everywhere with every token of respect and admiration. At Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock, and Ayr, multitudes assembled to listen to

his addresses ; and at Irvine, his native place, the enthusiasm of the people was irrepressible. He wrote to Sarah Gales :—

I was met at the station by the provost and magistrates, and being conducted to their hall, was made a burges^s of that ancient and royal burgh ; and my freedom-scroll was presented with many very fine and cordial congratulations. I cannot say more than that the heart of all Irvine seemed to be moved on the occasion, and every soul in it, old and young, rich and poor, to hail me to my birthplace. My heart was almost beyond feeling by the overpowering kindness that oppressed it, and the overflowing gratitude that could scarcely find vent in words or tears.

Montgomery visited his father's chapel, and the cottage where he was born. He saw an aged woman, who told him she had many a time carried him on her back. 'I had no idea,' he said, at Edinburgh, 'till I came to Irvine how great a man I was.' From Irvine the deputation proceeded to Stirling, Perth, and Edinburgh, large missionary meetings being held in each of these towns. His reception was such that it reminded him of the saying of Dr. Johnson on Lord Mansfield, that much may be made of a Scotchman if he is caught young. 'My case,' he said, 'was the reverse of this : I thought much was sometimes made of a Scotchman when he was grown old, for I never was so much made of till I came to Scotland.'

Mr. Robert Montgomery was now a popular preacher in Glasgow, but he did not think fit to pay a visit to his illustrious namesake while in that city. The poet went to hear him preach, but did not admire his oratory. Miss Gales asked, 'Do not the ladies of

Glasgow admire his person and address?' Montgomery replied, 'Yes, I heard some of them praise the delicacy of his hands; but it seems none of his fair admirers can get fast hold of them.'

After Montgomery's return from Scotland, the evening of his life glided away with little incident. In 1842 he went with Mr. Latrobe on a missionary tour to Ireland, and visited his father's former abode at Grace Hill. The death of his brother Ignatius, a worthy Moravian minister, deeply affected him; and in his last years he often expressed his regret that he himself had not entered the ministry of the Brotherhood, as his parents had desired. On the death of Southey his friends thought it probable he might be offered the laureateship; but the office was conferred on Wordsworth. After the beginning of 1843 the poet began to sink fast in health and spirits, often describing himself as 'ailing, feeble, and spiritless.' He regarded it as a milestone marking his downward course when, in 1845, he became unable to put on his greatcoat without assistance; and though he continued to appear occasionally at religious meetings, his voice had become so weak and his mind so much enfeebled that his appearance there was painful to his friends. 'His mind,' he said in 1846, 'was worn down to a grindle-coke,'—the Sheffield term for a worn-out grindstone. In October of that year he fell down a long flight of stairs, and 'was dreadfully bruised, and sadly shaken and unnerved.' Still he was able in the following year to pay a visit to Fulneck; and in May, 1848, he presided at the anniversary meeting of the Wesleyan

Missionary Society at Sheffield. In that year the *Sheffield Iris* became extinct. The poet continued to read with interest the periodicals and new books of the day: he wrote a hymn now and then, but even that slight exertion affected his health. In 1849 the new edition of his *Poems*, in four volumes, was published by Messrs. Longman, and in 1850 the edition in one volume. Montgomery was startled, in 1851, by reading in an American newspaper a notice of his death, with a sketch of his life and character. On the evening of July 19th, 1852, he delivered a lecture at the Music Hall, *On Some Passages of English Poetry Little Known*; but his feeble state excited the sympathy of his audience, 'all of whom were now conscious that it was the last time they should ever so meet and hear him.' In October of that year he 'cried many a time' over *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; and so late as February, 1854, he listened with much interest to passages from Landor's *Last Fruit off an Old Tree*. He had hoped to spend Easter of that year at Fulneck, but failing strength disappointed him. On the afternoon of Saturday, the 29th of April, he called on Mr. Holland, and complained of some oppression at the chest, but walked home as usual. He was 'fidgety' during the evening, and at family-worship handed the Bible to Sarah Gales, and asked her to read: he then knelt down, and prayed with peculiar fervour. He retired to rest at his accustomed hour, but the next morning a servant found him lying unconscious on the floor, where he must have been for several hours. Medical aid was procured, and he recovered so far as

to take a little dinner. At half-past three in the afternoon, while Miss Gales was sitting by his bedside, watching him apparently asleep, a slight change passed over his features. Montgomery was gone.

He was buried on the 11th of May, in the cemetery at Sheffield, amid such demonstrations of respect as were never paid to any individual in Sheffield before. The shops were generally closed, and the manufactories deserted. All the official bodies of Sheffield were represented in the procession. The vicar of Sheffield and twenty-four of the clergy formed part of it. The burial service of the Church of England was read by the vicar, and at its conclusion a hymn, written long before by the poet himself, was sung by the parish choir and the children of the boys' and girls' charity schools. The coffin bore the inscription—'James Montgomery : died April the 30th, 1854, in the 83rd year of his age.'

We have not space to offer anything like a satisfactory estimate of this good man's poetical genius. That he had from an early age the poetic temperament strongly developed cannot be questioned ; nor need we hesitate to say that no religious poet has ever surpassed him in the grace and melody of his diction, the purity, pathos, and fervour of his thought. A great charm in Montgomery's sacred poetry results from its evident sincerity : the glittering conceits with which Moore has surrounded pious themes do not *ring sound* when we compare them with the simple earnestness which breathes from every line of the happiest effusions of the poet of Sheffield. Not force and passion, but chaste

beauty and gentle pathos, are the characteristics of what Montgomery wrote; and the piety of the man had so permeated and leavened his entire being that without a thought or effort it coloured everything that proceeded from his pen. No short poems in the language have found a wider circulation or a more universal acceptance than *Prayer* and *The Common Lot*; and we might easily gather from *The Pelican Island* and *The World before the Flood* specimens of a more daring flight than are familiar to such as know Montgomery mainly as a hymnologist. We find nowhere in his four volumes that insight, passion, and reach of reflection, which distinguish the highest class of the poetry of to-day. The beautiful *Lines to a Mole-hill in a Church-yard*, which Montgomery amplified and spoiled in his latest edition, have always appeared to us to comprise, within a short space, the most favourable characteristics of his poetry: there is, indeed, that undue *dilution* of thought, which marks the composition of one who never learned to compress: but there are likewise a vein of gentle original reflection, a pathos which permeates the whole, a sympathy with all that is or was human,—all sobered somewhat by the poet's pervading sadness, and all expressed in words so choice, so harmonious, so naturally arranged, as prove how lightly the material trammels of verse sat upon his gentle and graceful spirit. No wonder if all who knew him loved the simple, pious, amiable, weak old man; no wonder if Sheffield was and is proud to claim him as her citizen; no wonder if the little Scotch town by the shore of the Atlantic, that gave him birth, and then saw him no

more till he came back a man of threescore years and ten, frail, timid, and famous, makes it her proudest boast that *there* was born James Montgomery; and preserves in her archives, with maternal solicitude, the manuscript of *The World before the Flood*.

V.

FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.*

THERE is a peculiar pleasure in paying a visit to a friend whom you never saw in his own house before. Let it not be believed that in this world there is much difficulty in finding a new sensation. The genial, unaffected, hard-wrought man, who does not think it fine to appear to care nothing for anything, will find a new sensation in many quiet places, and in many simple ways. There is something fresh and pleasant in arriving at an entirely new railway station, in getting out upon a platform on which you never before stood ; in finding your friend standing there looking quite at home in a place quite strange to you ; in taking in at a glance the expression of the porter who takes your luggage and the clerk who receives your ticket, and reading there something of their character and their life ; in going outside, and seeing for the first time your friend's carriage, whether the stately drag or the humbler dog-cart, and beholding horses

* *Friends in Council* : a Series of Readings and Discourses thereon. A New Series. Two Volumes. London: 1859.

you never saw before, caparisoned in harness heretofore unseen ; in taking your seat upon cushions hitherto unpressed by you, in seeing your friend take the reins, and then in rolling away over a new road, under new trees, over new bridges, beside new hedges, looking upon new landscapes stretching far away, and breaking in upon that latent idea common to all people who have seen very little, that they have seen almost all the world. Then there is something fresh and pleasant in driving for the first time up the avenue, in catching the first view of the dwelling which is to your friend the centre of all the world, in walking up for the first time to your chamber (you ought always to arrive at a country house for a visit about three quarters of an hour before dinner), and then in coming down and finding yourself in the heart of his belongings ; seeing his wife and children, never seen before ; finding out his favourite books, and coming to know something of his friends, horses, dogs, pigs, and general way of life ; and then after ten days, in going away, feeling that you have occupied a new place and seen a new phase of life, henceforward to be a possession for ever.

But it is pleasanter by a great deal to go and pay a visit to a friend visited several times (not too frequently) before ; to arrive at the old railway station, quiet and country-like, with trees growing out of the very platform on which you step ; to see your friend's old face not seen for two years ; to go out and discern the old drag standing just where you remember it, and to smooth down the horses' noses as an old acquaintance ; to discover a look of recognition on the man-servant's

impassive face, which at your greeting expands into a pleased smile ; to drive away along the old road, recognising cottages and trees ; to come in sight of the house again, your friend's conversation and the entire aspect of things bringing up many little remembrances of the past ; to look out of your chamber window before dinner and to recognise a large beech or oak which you had often remembered when you were far away, and the field beyond, and the hills in the distance, and to know again even the pattern of the carpet and the bed curtains ; to go down to dinner, and meet the old greeting ; to recognise the taste of the claret ; to find the children a little bigger, a little shy at first, but gradually acknowledging an old acquaintance ; and then, when your friend and you are left by yourselves, to draw round the fire (such visits are generally in September), and enjoy the warm, hearty look of the crimson curtains hanging in the self-same folds as twenty-four months since, and talk over many old things.

We feel, in opening the new volumes of *Friends in Council*, as we should in going to pay a visit to an old friend living in the same pleasant home, and at the same pleasant autumnal season in which we visited him before. We know what to expect. We know that there may be little variations from what we have already found, little changes wrought by time ; but, barring great accident or disappointment, we know what kind of thing the visit will be. And we believe that to many who have read with delight the previous volumes of this work there can hardly be any pleasanter

anticipation than that of more of the same wise, kindly, interesting material which they remember. A good many years have passed since the first volume of *Friends in Council* was published; a good many years even since the second: for, besides various conversations which are not included in the present series, the essays and discourses now given to the public form the third published portion of the work. Continuations of successful works have proverbially proved failures; the author was his own too successful rival; and intelligent readers, trained to expect much, have generally declared that the new production was, if not inferior to its predecessor, at all events inferior to what its predecessor had taught them to look for. But there is no falling off here. The writing of essays and conversations, set in a framework of scenery and incident, and delineating character admirably though only incidentally, is the field of literature in which the author stands without a rival. No one in modern days can discuss a grave subject in a style so attractive; no one can convey so much wisdom with so much playfulness and kindness; no one can evince so much earnestness unalloyed by the least tinge of exaggeration. The order of thought which is contained in *Friends in Council* is quarried from its author's best vein. Here he has come upon what gold-diggers call a *pocket*: and he appears to work it with little effort. However difficult it might be for others to write an essay and discourse on it in the fashion of this book, we should judge that its author does so quite easily. It is no task for suns to shine. And it will bring back many plea-

sant remembrances to the minds of many readers to open these new volumes, and find themselves at once in the same kindly atmosphere as ever ; to find that the old spring is flowing yet. The new series of *Friends in Council* is precisely what the intelligent reader must have expected. A thoroughly good writer can never surprise us. A writer whom we have studied, mused over, sympathised with, can surprise us only by doing something eccentric, affected, unworthy of himself. The more thoroughly we have sympathised with him ; the more closely we have marked not only the strong characteristics which are already present in what he writes, but those little matters which may be the germs of possible new characteristics ; the less likely is it that we shall be surprised by anything he does or says. It is so with the author of *Friends in Council*. We know precisely what to expect from him. We should feel aggrieved if he gave us anything else. Of course there will be much wisdom and depth of insight ; much strong practical sense : there will be playfulness, pensiveness, pathos ; great fairness and justice ; much kindness of heart ; something of the romantic element ; and as for style, there will be language always free from the least trace of affectation ; always clear and comprehensible ; never slovenly ; sometimes remarkable for a certain simple felicity ; sometimes rising into force and eloquence of a very high order : a style, in short, not to be parodied, not to be caricatured, not to be imitated except by writing as well. The author cannot sink below our expectations ; cannot rise above them. He has already written so much, and so many

thoughtful readers have so carefully studied what he has written, that we know the exact length of his tether, and he can say nothing for which we are not prepared. You know exactly what to expect in this new work. You could not, indeed, produce it; you could not describe it, you could not say beforehand what it will be; but when you come upon it, you will feel that it is just what you were sure it would be. You were sure, as you are sure what will be the flavour of the fruit on your pet apple-tree, which you have tasted a hundred times. The tree is quite certain to produce that fruit which you remember and like so well; it is its nature to do so. And the analogy holds further. For, as little variations in weather or in the treatment of the tree—a dry season, or some special application to the roots—may somewhat alter the fruit, though all within narrow limits; so may change of circumstances a little affect an author's writings, but only within a certain range. The apple-tree may produce a somewhat different apple; but it will never produce an orange, neither will it yield a crab.

When we have sufficiently enjoyed the external and material characteristics of the volumes, we shall find ourselves among our old friends. We should have good reason to complain had Dunsford, Ellesmere, or Milverton been absent; and here they are again just as before. Possibly they are even less changed than they should have been after thirteen or fourteen years, considering what their age was at our first introduction to them. Dunsford, the elderly country parson, once fellow and tutor of his college, still reports the conver-

sations of the friends ; Milverton and Ellesmere are, in their own way, as fond of one another as ever ; Dunsford is still judicious, kind, good, somewhat slow, as country parsons not unnaturally become ; Ellesmere is still sarcastic, keen, clever, with much real worldly wisdom and much affected cynicism overlying a kind and honest heart. As for Milverton, we should judge that in him the author of the work has unconsciously shown us himself ; for assuredly the great characteristics of the author of *Friends in Council* must be that he is laborious, thoughtful, generous, well-read, much in earnest, eager for the welfare of his fellow-men, deeply interested in politics and in history, impatient of puritanical restraints, convinced of the substantial importance of amusement. Milverton, we gather, still lives at his country seat in Hampshire, and takes some interest in rustic concerns. Ellesmere continues to rise at the bar ; since we last met him has been Solicitor-General, and is now *Sir John*, a Member of the House of Commons, and in the fair way to a Chief Justiceship. The clergyman's quiet life is going on as before. But in addition to our three old friends we find an elderly man, one Mr. Midhurst, whose days have been spent in diplomacy, who is of a melancholy disposition, and takes gloomy views of life, but who is much skilled in cookery, very fat, and very fond of a good dinner. Also Mildred and Blanche, Milverton's cousins, two sisters, have grown up into young women of very different character : and they take some share in the conversations, and, as we shall hereafter see, a still more important part in the action of the story. We feel that we are in the midst

of a real group of actual human beings :—just what third-rate historians fail to make us feel when telling us of men and women who have actually lived. The time and place are very varied; but through the greater portion of the book the party are travelling over the Continent. A further variation from the plan of the former volumes, besides the introduction of new characters, is, that while all the essays in the preceding series were written by Milverton, we have now one by Ellesmere, one by Dunsford, and one by Mr. Midhurst, each being in theme and manner very characteristic of its author. But, as heretofore, the writer of the book holds to his principle of the impolicy of ‘jading anything too far,’ and thinks with Bacon, that ‘it is good, in discourse and speech of conversation, to vary and intermingle speech of the present occasion with arguments, tales with reasons, asking of questions with telling of opinions, and jest with earnest.’ The writer likewise holds by that system which his own practice has done so much to recommend—of giving locality and time to all abstract thought, and thus securing in the case of the majority of readers an interest and a reality in no other way to be attained. Admirable as are the essays contained in the work, but for their setting in something of a story, and their vivification by being ascribed to various characters, and described as read and discussed in various scenes, they would interest a very much smaller class of readers than now they do. No doubt much of the skill of the dramatist is needed to secure this source of interest. It can be secured only where we feel that the characters are living men and women,

and the attempt to secure it has often proved a miserable failure. But it is here that the author of *Friends in Council* succeeds so well. Not only do we know precisely what Dunsford, Milverton, and Ellesmere are like; we know exactly what they ought and what they ought not to say. The author ran a risk in reproducing those old friends. We had a right to expect in each of them a certain idiosyncrasy; and it is not easy to maintain an individuality which does not dwell in mere caricature and exaggeration, but in the truthful traits of actual life. We feel we have a vested interest in the characters of the three friends: not even their author has the right essentially to alter them; we should feel it an injury if he did. But he has done what he intended. Here we have the selfsame men. Not a word is said by one of them that ought to have been said by another. And here it may be remarked, that any one who is well read in the author's writings will not fail here and there to come upon what will appear familiar to him. Various thoughts, views, and even expressions occur which the author has borrowed from himself. It is easy to be seen that in all this there is no conscious repetition, but that veins of thought and feeling long entertained have cropped out to the surface again.

We do not know whether or not the readers of *Friends in Council* will be startled at finding that these volumes show us the grave Milverton and the sarcastic Ellesmere in the capacity of lovers, and leave them in the near prospect of being married—Ellesmere to the bold and dashing Mildred; Milverton to the quiet

Blanche. The gradual tending of things to this conclusion forms the main action of the book. The incidents are of the simplest character: there is a plan but no plot, except as regards these marriages. Wearied and jaded with work at home, the three friends of the former volumes resolve on going abroad for a while. Midhurst and the girls accompany them: and the story is simply that at various places to which they came, one friend read an essay or uttered a discourse (for sometimes the essays are supposed to have been given *extempore*), and the others talked about it. But the gradual progress of matters towards the weddings (it may be supposed that the happy couples are this September on their wedding tours) is traced with much skill and much knowledge of the fashion in which such things go; and it supplies a peculiar interest to the work, which will probably tide many young ladies over essays on such grave subjects as *Government* and *Despotism*. Still, we confess that we had hardly regarded Ellesmere and Milverton as marrying men. We had set them down as too old, grave, and wise, for at least the preliminary stages. We have not forgotten that Dunsford told us * that in the summer of 1847 he supposed no one but himself would speak of Milverton and Ellesmere as young men; and now of course they are twelve years older, and yet about to be married to girls whom we should judge to be about two or three and twenty. And although it is not an unnatural thing that Ellesmere should have got over his affection for the German

* *Friends in Council*, Introduction to Book II.

Gretchen, whose story is so exquisitely told in the *Companions of my Solitude*, we find it harder to reconcile Milverton's marriage with our previous impression of him. Yet perhaps all this is truthful to life. It is not an unnatural thing that a man who for years has settled down into the belief that he has faded, and that for him the romantic interest has gone from life, should upon some fresh stimulus gather himself up from that idea, and think that life is not so far gone after all. Who has not on a beautiful September day sometimes chidden himself for having given in to the impression that the season was so far advanced, and clung to the belief that it is almost summer still?

In a preliminary *Address to the Reader*, the author explains that the essay on *War*, which occupies a considerable portion of the first volume, was written some time ago, and intends no allusion to recent events in Europe. The *Address* contains an earnest protest against the maintenance of large standing armies; it is eloquent and forcible, and it affords additional proof how much the author has thought upon the subject of war, and how deeply he feels upon it. Then comes the *Introduction* proper, written, of course, by Dunsford. It sets out with the praise of conversation, and then it sums up what the 'Friends' have learned in their longer experience of life:—

We 'Friends in Council' are of course somewhat older men than when we first began to meet in friendly conclave; and I have observed as men go on in life they are less and less inclined to be didactic. They have found out that nothing is, didactically speaking, true. They long for exceptions, modifications,

allowances. A boy is clear, sharp, decisive in his talk. He would have this. He would do that. He hates this; he loves that: and his loves or his hatreds admit of no exception. He is sure that the one thing is quite right, and the other quite wrong. He is not troubled with doubts. He knows.

I see now why, as men go on in life, they delight in anecdotes. These tell so much, and argue, or pronounce directly, so little.

The three friends were sauntering one day in Milverton's garden, all feeling much overwrought and very stupid. Ellesmere proposed that for a little recreation they should go abroad. Milverton pleads his old horror of picture-galleries, and declares himself content with the unpainted pictures he has in his mind:—

It is curious, but I have been painting two companion pictures ever since we have been walking about in the garden. One consists of some dilapidated garden architecture, with overgrown foliage of all kinds, not forest foliage, but that of rare trees such as the Sumach and Japan-cedar, which should have been neglected for thirty years. Here and there, instead of the exquisite parterre, there should be some miserable patches of potatoes and beans, and some squalid clothes hung out to dry. Two ill-dressed children, but of delicate features, should be playing about an ugly neglected pool that had once been the basin to the fountain. But the foliage should be the chief thing, gaunt, grotesque, rare, beautiful, like an unkempt, uncared-for, lovely mountain girl. Underneath this picture:—‘Property in the country, in chancery.’

The companion picture, of course, should be:—‘Property in town, in chancery.’ It should consist of two or three hideous, sordid, window-broken, rat-deserted, paintless, blackened houses, that should look as if they had once been too good company for the neighbourhood, and had met with a fall in life, not deplored by anyone. At the opposite corner should be a flaunting new gin-palace. I do not know whether I should have the heart to bring any children there, but I would if I could.

The reader will discern that the author of *Friends in Council* has lost nothing of his power of picturesque description, and nothing of his horror of the abuses and cruelties of the law. And the passage may serve to remind of the touching, graphic account of the country residence of a reduced family in the *Companions of my Solitude*.* Ellesmere assures Milverton that he shall not be asked to see a single picture; and that if Milverton will bring Blanche and Mildred with him, he will himself go and see seven of the chief sewers in seven of the chief towns. The appeal to the sanitarian's feelings is successful; the bargain is struck; and we next find the entire party sauntering, after an early German dinner, on the terrace of some small town on the Rhine,—Dunsford forgets which. Milverton, Ellesmere, and Mr. Midhurst are smoking, and we commend their conversation on the soothing power of tobacco to the attention of the Dean of Carlisle. Dean Close, by a bold figure, calls tobacco a 'gorging fiend.' Milverton holds that smoking is perhaps the greatest blessing that we owe to the discovery of America. He regards its value as abiding in its power to soothe under the vexations and troubles of life. While smoking, you cease to live almost wholly in the future, which miserable men for the most part do. The question arises, whether the sorrows of the old or the young are the most acute? It is admitted that the sorrows of children are very overwhelming for the time, but they are not of that varied,

* Chap. IV.

perplexed, and bewildering nature which derives much consolation from smoke. Ellesmere suggests, very truthfully, that the feeling of shame for having done anything wrong, or even ridiculous, causes most acute misery to the young. And, indeed, who does not know, from personal experience, that the sufferings of children of even four or five years old are often quite as dreadful as those which come as the sad heritage of after years? We look back on them now, and smile at them as we think how small were their causes. Well, they were great to us. We were little creatures then, and little things were relatively very great. 'The sports of childhood satisfy the child:' the sorrows of childhood overwhelm the poor little thing. We think a sympathetic reader would hardly read without a tear as well as a smile, an incident in the early life of Patrick Fraser Tytler, recorded in his recently published biography. When five years old, he got hold of the gun of an elder brother, and broke the spring of its lock. What anguish the little boy must have endured, what a crushing sense of having caused an irremediable evil, before he sat down and printed in great letters the following epistle to his brother, the owner of the gun—'Oh, Jamie, think no more of guns, for the main-spring of that is broken, and *my heart is broken!*' Doubtless the poor little fellow fancied that all the remainder of his life he never would feel as he had felt before he touched the unlucky weapon. Doubtless the little heart was just as full of anguish as it could hold. Looking back over many years, most of us can remember a child crushed

and overwhelmed by some sorrow which it thought could never be got over, and can feel for our early self as though sympathising with another personality.

The upshot of the talk which began with tobacco was, that Milverton was prevailed upon to write an essay on a subject of universal interest to all civilised beings, an essay on *Worry*. He felt, indeed, that he should be writing it at a disadvantage ; for an essay on worry can be written with full effect only by a thoroughly worried man. There was no worry at all in that quiet little town on the Rhine ; they had come there to rest, and there was no intruding duty that demanded that it should be attended to. And probably there is no respect in which that great law of the association of ideas, that *like suggests like*, holds more strikingly true than in the power of a present state of mind, or a present state of outward circumstances, to bring up vividly before us all such states in our past history. We are depressed, we are worried : and when we look back, all our departed days of worry and depression appear to start up and press themselves upon our view to the exclusion of anything else, so that we are ready to think that we have never been otherwise than depressed and worried all our life. But when more cheerful times come, they suggest only such times of cheerfulness, and no effort will bring back the worry vividly as when we felt it. It is not selfishness or heartlessness ; it is the result of an inevitable law of mind that people in happy circumstances should resolutely believe that it is a happy world after all ; for looking back, and looking around,

the mind refuses to take distinct note of anything that is not somewhat akin to its present state. Milverton wrote an excellent essay on Worry on the evening of that day ; but he might possibly have written a better one at Worth-Ashton on the evening of a day on which he had discovered that his coachman was stealing the corn provided for the carriage horses, or galloping these animals about the country at the dead of night to see his friends. We must have a score of little annoyances stinging us at once to have the undiluted sense of being worried. And probably a not wealthy man, residing in the country, and farming a few acres of ground by means of somewhat unfaithful and neglectful servants, may occasionally find so many things going wrong at once, and so many little things demanding to be attended to at once, that he shall experience worry in as high a degree as it can be felt by mortal. Thus truthfully does Milverton's essay begin :—

The great characteristic of modern life is Worry.

If the Pagan religion still prevailed, the new goddess, in whose honour temples would be raised and to whom statues would be erected in all the capitals of the world, would be the goddess Worry. London would be the chief seat and centre of her sway. A gorgeous statue, painted and enriched after the manner of the ancients (for there is no doubt that they adopted this practice, however barbarous it may seem to us), would be set up to the goddess in the West-end of the town : another at Temple Bar, of less ample dimensions and less elaborate decoration, would receive the devout homage of worshippers who came to attend their lawyers in that quarter of the town : while a statue, on which the cunning sculptor should have impressed the marks of haste, anxiety, and agitation, would be sharply glanced up at, with as much veneration as they could afford to give to it, by the eager men of business in the City.

The goddess Worry, however, would be no local deity, worshipped merely in some great town, like Diana of the Ephesians ; but, in the market-places of small rural communities, her statue, made somewhat like a vane, and shifting with every turn of the wind, would be regarded with stolid awe by anxious votaries belonging to what is called the farming interest. Familiar too and household would be her worship ; and in many a snug home where she might be imagined to have little potency, small and ugly images of her would be found as household gods—the Lares and Penates—near to the threshold, and ensconced above the glowing hearth.

The poet, always somewhat inclined to fable, speaks of Love as ruling

The court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and heaven above ;

but the dominion of Love, as compared with that of Worry, would be found in the number of subjects, as the Macedonian to the Persian—in extent of territory, as the county of Rutland to the empire of Russia.

Not verbally accurate is the quotation from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, we may remark ; but we may take it for granted that no reader who has exceeded the age of twenty-five will fail to recognise in this half-playful and half-earnest passage the statement of a sorrowful fact. And the essay goes on to set forth many of the causes of modern worry with all the knowledge and earnestness of a man who has seen much of life, and thought much upon what he has seen. The author's sympathies are not so much with the grand trials of historical personages, such as Charles V., Columbus, and Napoleon, as with the lesser trials and cares of ordinary men ; and in the following paragraph

we discern at once the conviction of a clear head and the feeling of a kind heart :—

And the ordinary citizen, even of a well-settled state, who, with narrow means, increasing taxation, approaching age, failing health, and augmenting cares, goes plodding about his daily work thickly bestrewed with trouble and worry (all the while, perhaps, the thought of a sick child at home being in the background of his mind), may also, like any hero of renown in the midst of his world-wide and world-attracting fortune, be a beautiful object for our sympathy.

There is indeed no more common error, than to estimate the extent of suffering by the greatness of the causes which have produced it ; we mean their greatness as regards the amount of notice which they attract. The anguish of an emperor who has lost his empire, is probably not one whit greater than that of a poor lady who loses her little means in a swindling Bank, and is obliged to take away her daughter from school and to move into an inferior dwelling. Nor is it unworthy of remark, in thinking of sympathy with human beings in suffering, that scrubby-looking little men, with weak hair and awkward demeanour, and not in the least degree gentlemanlike, may through domestic worry and bereavement undergo distress quite as great as heroic individuals six feet four inches in height, with a large quantity of raven hair, and with eyes of remarkable depth of expression. It is probable, too, that in the lot of ordinary men a ceaseless and countless succession of little worries does a great deal more to fret away the happiness of life than is done by the few great and overwhelming misfortunes which

happen at long intervals. You lose your child, and your sorrow is overwhelming; but it is a sorrow on which before many months you look back with a sad yet pleasing interest, and it is a sorrow which you know you are the better for having felt. But petty unfaithfulness, carelessness, and stupidity on the part of your servants; little vexations and cross-accidents in your daily life; the ceaseless cares of managing a household and family, and possibly of making an effort to maintain appearances with very inadequate means; —all those little annoying things which are not misfortune but worry, effectually blister away the enjoyment of life while they last, and serve no good end in respect to mental and moral discipline. ‘Much tribulation,’ deep and dignified sorrow, may prepare men for ‘the kingdom of God:’ but ceaseless worry, for the most part, does but sour the temper, jaundice the views, and embitter and harden the heart.

‘The grand source of worry,’ says our author, ‘compared with which perhaps all others are trivial, lies in the complexity of human affairs, especially in such an era of civilisation as our own.’ There can be no doubt of it. In these modern days, we are encumbered and weighed down with the appliances, physical and moral, which have come to be regarded as essential to the carrying forward of our life. We forget how many thousands of separate items and articles were counted up, as having been used, some time within the last few years, by a dinner-party of eighteen persons, at a single entertainment. What incalculable worry in the procuring, the keeping in order, the using, the

damage, the storing up, of that enormous complication of china, glass, silver, and steel ! We can well imagine how a man of simple tastes and quiet disposition, worried even to death by his large house, his numerous servants and horses, his quantities of furniture and domestic appliances, all of a perishable nature, and all constantly wearing out and going wrong in various degrees, might sigh a wearied sigh for the simplicity of a hermit's cave and a hermit's fare, and for 'one perennial suit of leather.' Such a man as the Duke of Buccleuch, possessing enormous estates, oppressed by a deep feeling of responsibility, and struggling to maintain a personal supervision of all his intricate and multitudinous belongings, must day by day undergo an amount of worry which the philosopher would probably regard as poorly compensated by a dukedom and three hundred thousand a year. He would be a noble benefactor of the human race who should teach men how to combine the simplicity of the savage life with the refinement and the cleanliness of the civilised. We fear it must be accepted as an unquestionable fact, that the many advantages of civilisation are to be obtained only at the price of countless and ceaseless worry. Of course, we must all sometimes sigh for the woods and the wigwam ; but the feeling is as vain as that of the psalmist's wearied aspiration, ' Oh that I had wings like a dove : then would I flee away and be at rest ! ' Our author says,

The great Von Humboldt went into the cottages of South American Indians, and, amongst an unwrinkled people, could with difficulty discern who was the father and who was the son, when he saw the family assembled together.

And how plainly the smooth, cheerful face of the savage testified to the healthfulness, in a physical sense, of a life devoid of worry ! If you would see the reverse of the medal, look at the anxious faces, the knit brows, and the bald heads, of the twenty or thirty greatest merchants whom you will see on the Exchange of Glasgow or of Manchester. Or you may find more touching proof of the ageing effect of worry, in the careworn face of the man of thirty with a growing family and an uncertain income ; or the thin figure and bloodless cheek which testify to the dull weight ever resting on the heart of the poor widow who goes out washing, and leaves her little children in her poor garret under the care of one of eight years old. But still, the cottages of Humboldt's 'unwrinkled people' were, we have little doubt, much infested with vermin, and possessed a pestilential atmosphere ; and the people's freedom from care did but testify to their ignorance and to their lack of moral sensibility. We must take worry, it is to be feared, along with civilisation. As you go down in the scale of civilisation you throw off worry by throwing off the things to which it can adhere. And in these days, in which no man would seriously think of preferring the savage life, with its dirt, its stupidity, its listlessness, its cruelty, the good we may derive from that life, or any life approximating to it, is mainly that of a sort of moral alterative and tonic. The thing itself would not suit us, and would do us no good ; but we may be the better for musing upon it. It is like a refreshing shower-bath, it is like breathing a cool breeze after the atmosphere of

a hot-house, to dwell for a little with half-closed eyes upon pictures which show us all the good of the un-worried life, and which say nothing of all the evil. We know the thing is vain : we know it is but an idle fancy ; but still it is pleasant and refreshful to think of such a life as Byron has sketched as the life of Daniel Boone. Not in misanthropy, but from the strong preference of a forest life, did the Kentucky backwoodsman keep many scores of miles ahead of the current of European population setting onwards to the West. We should feel much indebted to any reader who will tell us where to find anything more delightful than the following stanzas, to read after an essay on modern worry :—

He was not all alone : around him grew
A sylvan tribe of children of the chase ;
Whose young, unawakened world was ever new,
Nor sin, nor sorrow, yet had left a trace
On her unwrinkled brow ; nor could you view
A frown on Nature's or on human face :
The free-born forest found and kept them free,
And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

And tall, and strong, and swift of foot were they,
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions :
Because their thoughts had never been the prey
Of care or gain : the green woods were their portions.
No sinking spirits told them they grew grey,
No fashion made them apes of her distortions ;
Simple they were, not savage, and their rifles,
Though very true, were yet not used for trifles.

Motion was in their days, rest in their slumbers,
And cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil :
Nor yet too many, nor too few their numbers,
Corruption could not make their hearts her soil :

The lust which stings, the splendour which encumbers,
With the free foresters divide no spoil :
Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
Of this unsighing people of the woods.

The essay on *Worry* is followed by an interesting conversation on the same subject, at the close of which we are heartily obliged to *Blanche* for suggesting one pleasant thought ; to wit, that children for the most part escape that sad infliction ; it is the special heritage of comparatively mature years. And *Mil-verton* replies :—

Yes : I have never been more struck with that than when observing a family in the middle class of life going to the sea-side. There is the anxious mother wondering how they shall manage to stow away all the children when they get down. Visions of damp sheets oppress her. The cares of packing sit upon her soul. Doubts of what will become of the house when it is left are a constant drawback from her thoughts of enjoyment ; and she confides to the partner of her cares how willingly, if it were not for the dear children, she would stay at home. He, poor man, has not an easy time of it. He is meditating over the expense, and how it is to be provided for. He knows, if he has any knowledge of the world, that the said expense will somehow or other exceed any estimate he and his wife have made of it. He is studying the route of the journey, and is perplexed by the various modes of going. This one would be less expensive, but would take more time ; and then time always turns into expense on a journey. In a word, the old birds are as full of care and trouble as a hen with ducklings ; but the young birds ! some of them have never seen the sea before, and visions of unspeakable delight fill their souls—visions that will almost be fulfilled. The journey, and the cramped accommodation, and the packing, and the everything out of place, are matters of pure fun and anticipated joy to them.

We have lingered all this while upon the first

chapter of the work : the second contains an essay and conversation on *War*. Of this chapter we shall say nothing except that it is earnest and sound in its views, and especially worthy of attentive consideration at the present time. The third chapter is one which will probably be turned to with interest by many readers ; it bears the title of *A Love Story*. Dunsford, a keen though quiet observer, has discovered that Ellesmere has grown fond of Mildred, though the lawyer was not likely to disclose his love. Dunsford suspects that Mildred's affections are set on Milverton, as he has little doubt those of Blanche are. Both girls are very loving to Dunsford, whom they call their uncle, though he is no relation, and the old clergyman determines to have an explanation with Mildred. He manages to walk alone with her through the unguarded orchards which lie along the Rhine ; and there, somewhat abruptly, he begins to moralise on the grand passion. Mildred remarks what a happy woman she would have been whom Dunsford had loved ; when the lucky thought strikes him that he would tell her his own story, never yet told to anyone. And then he tells it, very simply and very touchingly. Like most true stories of the kind, it has little incident ; but it constituted the romance, not yet outlived, of the old gentleman's existence. He and a certain Alice were brought up together. Like many of the most successful students, Dunsford hated study, and was devoted to music and poetry, to nature and art. But he knew his only chance of winning Alice was to obtain some success in life, and he devoted himself to study. Who

does not feel for the old man recalling the past, and, as he remembered those laborious days, saying to the girl by his side, 'Always reverence a scholar, my dear ; if not for the scholarship, at least for the suffering and the self-denial which have been endured to gain the scholar's proficiency?' His only pleasure was in correspondence with Alice. He succeeded at last. He took his degree, being nearly the first man of his year in both of the great subjects of examination ; and he might now come home with some hope of having made a beginning of fortune. A gay young fellow, a cousin of Alice, came to spend a few days ; and of course this lively, thoughtless youth, without an effort carried off the prize of all poor Dunsford's toils. You never win the thing on which your heart is set and your life staked ; it falls to some one else who cares very little about it. It is poor compensation that you get something you little care for which would have made the happiness of another man. Dunsford discovers one evening, in a walk with Alice, the frustration of all his hopes :—

Alice and I were alone again, and we walked out together in the evening. We spoke of my future hopes and prospects. I remember that I was emboldened to press her arm. She returned the pressure, and for a moment there never was, perhaps, a happier man. Had I known more of love, I should have known that this evident return of affection was anything but a good sign ; 'and,' continued she, in the unconnected manner that you women sometimes speak, 'I am so glad that you love dear Henry. Oh, if we could but come and live near you when you get a curacy, how happy we should all be !' This short sentence was sufficient. There was no need of more explanation. I knew all

that had happened, and felt as if I no longer trod upon the firm earth, for it seemed a quicksand under me.

The agony of that dull evening, the misery of that long night ! I have sometimes thought that unsuccessful love is almost too great a burden to be put upon such a poor creature as man. But He knows best ; and it must have been intended, for it is so common.

The next day I remember I borrowed Henry's horse, and rode madly about, bounding through woods (I who had long forgotten to ride) and galloping over open downs. If the animal had not been wiser and more sane than I was, we should have been dashed to pieces many times. And so by sheer exhaustion of body I deadened the misery of my mind, and looked upon their happy state with a kind of stupefaction. In a few days I found a pretext for quitting my home, and I never saw your mother again, for it was your mother, Mildred, and you are not like her, but like your father, and still I love you. But the great wound has never been healed. It is a foolish thing, perhaps, that any man should so doat upon a woman, that he should never afterwards care for any other, but so it has been with me ; and you cannot wonder that a sort of terror should come over me when I see anybody in love, and when I think that his or her love is not likely to be returned.

Who would have thought that Dunsford, with his gaiters, lying on the grass listening cheerfully to the lively talk of his two friends, or sitting among his bees repeating Virgil to himself, or going about among his parishioners, the ideal of prosaic content and usefulness, had still in him this store of old romance ? In asking the question, all we mean is to remark an apparent inconsistency : we have no doubt at all of the philosophic truth of the representation. Probably it is only in the finer natures that such early fancies linger with appreciable effect. We do not forget the perpetually repeated declarations of Mr. Thackeray ; we did not

read *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story* for nothing; we remember the very absurd incident which is told of Dr. Chalmers, who in his last years testified his remembrance of an early sweetheart by sticking his card with two wafers behind a wretched little *silhouette* of her. And it is conceivable that the tenderest and most beautiful reminiscences of a love of departed days may linger with a man who has grown grey, fat, and even snuffy. But it is only in the case of remarkably tidy, neat, and clever old gentlemen that such feelings are likely to attract much sympathy from their juniors. Possibly this world has more of such lingering romance than is generally credited. Possibly with all but very stolid and narrow natures, no very strong feeling goes without leaving some trace.

Pain and grief
Are transitory things no less than joy;
And though *they leave us not the men we were,*
Yet they do leave us.

Possibly it is not without some little stir of heart that most thoughtful aged persons can revisit certain spots, or see certain days return. And the affection which would have worn itself down into dull commonplace in success, by being disappointed and frustrated, lives on in memory with diminished vividness, but with increasing beauty, which the test of actual fact can never make prosaic. Dunsford tells Mildred what was his great inducement to make this continental tour. Not the Rhine; not the essays nor the conversations of his friends. At the Palace of the Luxemburg there is a fine picture, called *Les illusions perdues*.

It is one of the most affecting pictures Dunsford ever saw. But that is not its peculiar merit. One girl in the picture is the image of what Alice was.

The chief thing I had to look forward to in this journey we are making was, that we might return by way of Paris, and that I might see that picture again. You must contrive that we do return that way. Ellesmere will do anything to please you, and Milverton is always perfectly indifferent as to where he goes, so that he is not asked to see works of art, or to accompany a party of sight-seers to a cathedral. We will go and see this picture together once ; and once I must see it alone.

And a very touching sight it would be to one who knew the story, the grey-haired old clergyman looking, for a long while, at that young face. It would be indeed a contrast, the aged man and the youthful figure in the picture. Dunsford never saw Alice again after his early disappointment : he never saw her as she grew matronly and then old ; and so, though now in her grave, she remained in his memory the same young thing for ever. The years which had made him grow old had wrought not the slightest change upon her. And Alice, old and dead, was the same on the canvas still.

Dunsford's purpose in telling his love story was to caution Mildred against falling in love with Milverton. She told him there was no danger. Once, she frankly said, she had long struggled with her feelings, not only from natural pride, but for the sake of Blanche, who loved Milverton better and would be less able to control her love. But she had quite got over the struggle ; and though now intensely sympathising with her cousin, she felt she never could resolve to marry him. So the conversation ended satisfactorily ; and then a

short sentence shows us a scene, beautiful, vivid, and complete :—

We walked home silently amidst the mellow orchards glowing ruddily in the rays of the setting sun.

The next chapter contains an Essay and conversation on *Criticism* : but its commencement shows us Dunsford still employed in the interests of his friends. He tells Milverton that Blanche is growing fond of him. We can hardly give Milverton credit for sincerity or judgment in being ‘greatly distressed and vexed.’ For once he was shamming. All middle-aged men are much flattered and pleased with the admiration of young girls. Milverton declared that the thing must be put a stop to ; that ‘the idea of a young and beautiful girl throwing her affections away upon a faded widower like himself was absurd.’ However, as the days went on Milverton began to be extremely attentive to Blanche ; asked her opinion about things quite beyond her comprehension ; took long walks with her, and assured Dunsford privately that ‘Blanche had a great deal more in her than most people supposed, and that she was becoming an excellent companion.’ Who does not recognise the process by which clever men persuade themselves into the belief that they are doing a judicious thing in marrying stupid women ?

The chapter which follows that on *Criticism* contains a conversation on *Biography*, full of interesting suggestions which our space renders it impossible for us to quote ; but we cannot forego the pleasure of

extracting the following paragraphs. It is Milverton who speaks :—

During Walter's last holidays, one morning after breakfast he took a walk with me. I saw something was on the boy's mind. At last he suddenly asked me, 'Do sons often write the lives of fathers?'—'Often,' I replied, 'but I do not think they are the best kind of biographers, for you see, Walter, sons cannot well tell the faults and weaknesses of their fathers, and so filial biographies are often rather insipid performances.'—'I don't know about that,' he said; 'I think I could write yours. I have made it already into chapters.'—'Now then, my boy,' I said, 'begin it: let us have the outline at least.' Walter then commenced his biography.

'The first chapter,' he said, 'should be you and I and Henry walking amongst the trees and settling which should be cut down, and which should be transplanted.'—'A very pretty chapter,' I said, 'and a great deal might be made of it.'—'The second chapter,' he continued, 'should be your going to the farm, and talking to the pigs.'—'Also a very good chapter, my dear.'—'The third chapter,' he said, after a little thought, 'should be your friends. I would describe them all, and what they could do.' There, you see, Ellesmere, you would come in largely, especially as to what you could do. 'An excellent chapter,' I exclaimed, and then of course I broke out into some paternal admonition about the choice of friends, which I know will have no effect whatever, but still one cannot help uttering these paternal admonitions.

'Now then,' I said, 'for chapter four.' Here Walter paused, and looked about him vaguely for a minute or two. At length he seemed to have got hold of the right idea, for he burst out with the words, 'My going back to school;' and that, it seemed, was to be the end of the biography.

Now, was there ever so honest a biographer? His going back to school was the 'be-all and end-all here' with him, and he resolved it should be the same with his hero, and with everybody concerned in the story.

Then see what a pleasant biographer the boy is! He does not

drag his hero down through the vale of life, amidst declining fortune, breaking health, dwindling away of friends, and the usual dreariness of the last few stages. Neither does the biography end with the death of his hero; and, by the way, it is not very pleasant to have one's children contemplating one's death, even for the sake of writing one's life; but the biographer brings the adventures of his hero to an end by his own going back to school. How delightful it would be if most biographers planned their works after Walter's fashion!—just gave a picture of their hero at his farm, or his business; then at his pleasure, as Walter brought me amongst my trees; then, to show what manner of man he was, gave some description of his friends; and concluded by giving an account of their own going back to school—a conclusion that is greatly to be desired for many of them.

When we begin to copy a passage from this work we find it very difficult to stop. But the thoughtful reader will not need to have it pointed out to him how much sound wisdom is conveyed in that playful form. And here is excellent advice as to the fashion in which men may hope to get through great intellectual labour: says Ellesmere,

I can tell you in a very few words how all work is done. Getting up early, eating vigorously, saying 'No' to intruders resolutely, doing one thing at a time, thinking over difficulties at odd times, *i.e.* when stupid people are talking in the House of Commons, or speaking at the Bar, not indulging too much in affections of any kind which waste the time and energies, carefully changing the current of your thoughts before you go to bed, planning the work of the day in the quarter of an hour before you get up, playing with children occasionally, and avoiding fools as much as possible: that is the way to do a great deal of work.

Milverton remarks, with justice, that some practical advices as to the way in which a working man might

succeed in avoiding fools were very much to be desired, inasmuch as that brief direction contains the whole art of life; and suggests, with equal justice, that the taking of a daily bath should be added to Ellesmere's catalogue of appliances which aid in working.

We cannot linger upon the remaining pages which treat of *Biography*, nor upon two interesting chapters concerning *Proverbs*. It may be noticed, however, that Ellesmere insists that the best proverb in the world is the familiar English one, 'Nobody knows where the shoe pinches but the wearer;' while Milverton tells us that the Spanish language is far richer in proverbs than that of any other nation. But we hasten to an essay which will be extremely fresh and interesting to all readers. We have had many essays by Milverton: here is one by Ellesmere. He had announced some time before his purpose of writing an essay on *The Arts of Self-Advancement*, and Mildred, whom Ellesmere took a pleasure in annoying by making a parade of mean, selfish, and cynical views, discerned at once that in such an essay he would have an opportunity of bringing together a crowd of these, and declared before Ellesmere began to write it that it would be 'a nauseous essay.' The essay is finished at length. The friends are now at Salzburg; and on a very warm day they assembled in a sequestered spot whence they could see the snowy peaks of the Tyrolese Alps. Ellesmere begins by deprecating criticism of his style, declaring that anything inaccurate or ungrammatical is put in on purpose. Then he begins to read:—

In the first place, it is desirable to be born north of the Tweed (I like to begin at the beginning of things); and if that cannot be managed, you must at least contrive to be born in a moderately-sized town—somewhere. You thus get the advantage of being favoured by a small community without losing any individual force. If I had been born in Affpuddle—Milverton in Tolpuddle—and Dunsford in Tollerporcorum (there are such places, at least I saw them once arranged together in a petition to the House of Commons), the men of Affpuddle, Tolpuddle, and Tollerporcorum would have been proud of us, would have been true to us, and would have helped to push our fortunes. I see, with my mind's eye, a statue of Dunsford raised in Tollerporcorum. You smile, I observe; but it is the smile of ignorance, for let me tell you, it is of the first importance not to be born vaguely, as in London, or in some remote country house. If you cannot, however, be born properly, contrive at least to be connected with some small sect or community, who may consider your renown as part of their renown, and be always ready to favour and defend you.

After this promising introduction Ellesmere goes on to propound views which in an extraordinary way combine real good sense and sharp worldly wisdom with a parade of all sorts of mean shifts and contemptible tricks whereby to take advantage of the weakness, folly, and wickedness of human nature. Very characteristically he delights in thinking how he is shocking and disgusting poor Mildred: of course Dunsford and Milverton understand him. And the style is as characteristic as the thought. It is unquestionably Ellesmere to whose essay we are listening; Milverton could not and would not have produced such a discourse. We remember to have read in a review, published several years since, of the former series of *Friends in Council*, that it was judicious in the author

of that work, though introducing several friends as talking together, to represent all the essays as written by one individual; because, although he could keep up the individuality of the speakers through a conversation, it was doubtful whether he could have succeeded in doing so through essays purporting to be written by each of them. We do not know whether the author ever saw the challenge thus thrown down to him: but it is certain that in the present series he has boldly attempted the thing, and thoroughly succeeded. And it may be remarked that not one of Ellesmere's propositions can be regarded as mere vagaries—every one of them contains truth, though truth put carefully in the most disagreeable and degrading way. Who does not know how great an element of success it is to belong to a sect or class which regard your reputation as identified with their own, and cry you up accordingly? It is to be admitted that there is the preliminary difficulty of so far overcoming individual envies and jealousies as to get your class to accept you as their representative; but once *that* end is accomplished the thing is done. As to being born north of the Tweed, a Scotch Lord Chancellor and a Scotch Bishop of London are instructive instances. And however much Scotchmen may abuse one another at home, it cannot be denied that all Scotchmen feel it a sacred duty to stand up for every Scotchman who has attained to eminence beyond the boundaries of his native land. Scotland indeed, in the sense in which Ellesmere uses the phrase, is a *small community*; and a community of very energetic, self-denying, laborious, and determined

men, with very many feelings in common which they have in common only with their countrymen, and with an invincible tendency in all times of trouble to remember the old cry of *Highlandmen shoulder to shoulder!* Let the ambitious reader muse on what follows :—

Let your position be commonplace, whatever you are yourself. If you are a genius, and contrive to conceal the fact, you really deserve to get on in the world, and you will do so, if only you keep on the level road. Remember always that the world is a place where second-rate people mostly succeed : not fools, nor first-rate people.

Cynically put, no doubt, but admirably true. A great blockhead will never be made an archbishop ; but in ordinary times a great genius stands next to him in the badness of his chance. After all, good sense and sound judgment are the essentially needful things in all but very exceptional situations in life—and for these commend us to the safe, steady-going, commonplace man. It cannot be denied that the great mass of mankind stand in doubt and fear of people who are wonderfully clever. What an amount of stolid, self-complacent, ignorant, stupid, conceited respectability is wrapped up in the declaration concerning any person, that he is ‘ too clever by half ! ’ How plainly it teaches that the general belief is that too ingenious machinery will break down in practical working, and that most men will do wrong who have the power to do it !

The following propositions are true in very large communities, but they will not hold good in the country or in little towns :—

Remember always that what is real and substantive ultimately has its way in this world.

You make good bricks for instance : it is in vain that your enemies prove that you are a heretic in morals, politics, and religion ; insinuate that you beat your wife ; and dwell loudly on the fact that you failed in making picture frames. In so far as you are a good brickmaker, you have all the power that depends on good brick-making ; and the world will mainly look to your positive qualities as a brickmaker.

After having gone on with a number of maxims of a very base, selfish, and suspicious nature, to the increasing horror of the girls, who are listening, Ellesmere passes from the consideration of modes of action to a much more important matter :—

Those who wish for self-advancement should remember that the art in life is not so much to do a thing well as to get a thing that has been moderately well done largely talked about. Some foolish people, who should have belonged to another planet, give all their minds to doing their work well. This is an entire mistake. This is a grievous loss of power. Such a method of proceeding may be very well in Jupiter, Mars, or Saturn, but is totally out of place in this puffing, advertising, bill-sticking part of creation. To rush into the battle of life without an abundance of kettledrums and trumpets is a weak and ill-advised adventure, however well-armed and well-accountred you may be. As I hate vague maxims, I will at once lay down the proportions in which force of any kind should be used in this world. Suppose you have a force which may be represented by the number one hundred : seventy-three parts at least of that force should be given to the trumpet ; the remaining twenty-seven parts may not disadvantageously be spent in doing the thing which is to be trumpeted. This is a rule unlike some rules in grammar, which are entangled and controlled by a multitude of vexatious exceptions ; but it applies equally to the conduct of all matters upon earth, whether social, moral, artistic, literary, political, or religious.

Ellesmere goes on to sum up the personal qualities

needful to success ; and having sketched out the character of a mean, crafty, sharp, energetic rascal, he concludes by saying that such a one

will not fail to succeed in any department of life—provided always he keeps for the most part to one department, and does not attempt to conquer in many directions at once. I only hope that, having profited by this wisdom of mine, he will give me a share of the spoil.

Thus the essay ends ; and then the *discourse thereon* begins—

MILVERTON. Well, of all the intolerable wretches and blackguards—

Mr. MIDHURST. A conceited prig, too !

DUNSFORD. A wicked, designing villain !

ELLESMERE. Any more : any more ? Pray go on, gentlemen ; and have you, ladies, nothing to say against the wise man of the world that I have depicted ?

And yet the upshot of the conversation was that, though given in a highly disagreeable and obtrusively base form, there was much truth in what Ellesmere had said. It is to be remembered that he did not pretend to describe a good man, but only a successful one. And it is to be remembered likewise that prudence verges toward baseness ; and that the difference between the suggestions of each lies very much in the fashion in which these suggestions are put and enforced. As to the use of the trumpet, how many advertising tailors and pill-makers could testify to the soundness of Ellesmere's principle ? And beyond the Atlantic it finds special favour. When Barnum exhibited his mermaid, and stuck up outside his show-room a picture of

three beautiful mermaids, of human size, with flowing hair, basking upon a summer sea, while inside the show-room he had the hideous little contorted figure made of a monkey with a fish's tail attached to it, probably the proportion of the trumpet to the thing trumpeted was even greater than seventy-three to twenty-seven. Dunsford suggests, for the comfort of those who will not stoop to unworthy means for obtaining success, the beautiful saying that 'Heaven is probably a place for those who have failed on earth.' And Ellesmere, adhering to his expressed views, declares—

If you had attended to them earlier in life, Dunsford would now be Mr. Dean; Milverton would be the Right Honorable Leonard Milverton, and the leader of a party; Mr. Midhurst would be chief cook to the Emperor Napoleon; the bull-dog would have been promoted to the parlour; I, but no man is wise for himself, should have been Lord Chancellor; Walter would be at the head of his class without having any more knowledge than he has at present; and as for you two girls, one would be a Maid of Honour to the Queen, and the other would have married the richest man in the country.

We have not space to tell how Ellesmeré planned to get Mr. Midhurst to write an essay on the *Miseries of Human Life*; nor how at Trèves, upon a lowering day, the party, seated in the ancient amphitheatre, heard it read; nor how fully, eloquently, and not unfairly, the gloomy man, not without a certain solemn enjoyment, summed up his sad catalogue of the ills that flesh is heir to; nor how Milverton agreed in the evening to speak an answer to the essay, and show that life was not so miserable after all; nor how Elles-

mere, eager to have it answered effectively, determined that Milverton should have the little accessories in his favour, the red curtains drawn, a blazing woodfire, and plenty of light ; nor how, before the answer began, he brought Milverton a glass of wine to cheer him ; nor how Milverton endeavoured to show that in the present system misery was not quite predominant, and that much good in many ways came out of ill. Then we have some talk about *Pleasantness* ; and Dunsford is persuaded to write and read an essay on that subject, which he read one morning, ‘ while we were sitting in the balcony of an hotel, in one of the small towns that overlook the Moselle, which was flowing beneath in a reddish turbid stream.’ In the conversation which follows, Milverton says—

It is a fault certainly to which writers are liable, that of exaggerating the claims of their subject.

And how truly is that said ! Indeed we can quite imagine a very earnest man feeling afraid to think too much and long about any existing evil, for fear it should greatness on his view into a thing so large and pernicious that he should be constrained to give all his life to the wrestling with that one thing, and attach to it an importance which would make his neighbours think him a monomaniac. If you think long and deeply upon any subject, it grows in magnitude and weight : if you think of it too long, it may grow big enough to exclude the thought of all things beside. If it be an existing and prevalent evil you are thinking of, you may come to fancy that if that one thing could be done away, it

would be well with the human race,—all evil would go with it. We can sympathise deeply with that man who died a short while since, who wrote volume after volume to prove that if men would only leave off stooping, and learn to hold themselves upright, it would be the grandest blessing that ever came to humanity. We can quite conceive the process by which a man might come to think so, without admitting mania as a cause. We confess, for ourselves, that so deeply do we feel the force of the law Milverton mentions, there are certain evils of which we are afraid to think much, for fear we should come to be able to think of nothing else, and of nothing more.

Then a pleasant chapter, entitled *Lovers' Quarrels*, tells us how matters are progressing with the two pairs. Milverton and Blanche are going on most satisfactorily; but Ellesmere and Mildred are wayward and hard to keep right. Ellesmere sadly disappointed Mildred by the sordid views he advanced in his essay, and kept advancing in his talk; and like a proud and shy man of middle age when in love, he was ever watching for distant slight indications of how his suit might be received, and rendered fractious by the uncertainty of Mildred's conduct and bearing. And probably women have little notion by what slight and hardly thought-of sayings and doings they may have repressed the declaration and the offer which might perhaps have made them happy. Day by day Dunsford was vexed by the growing estrangement between two persons who were really much attached; and this unhappy state of matters might have ended in a final separation but for

the happy incident recorded in the chapter called *Rowing down the River Moselle*. The party had rowed down the river, talking as usual of many things :—

It was just at this point of the conversation that we pulled in nearer to the land, as Walter had made signs that he wished now to get into the boat. It was a weedy rushy part of the river that we entered. Fixer saw a rat or some other creature, which he was wild to get at. Ellesmere excited him to do so, and the dog sprang out of the boat. In a minute or two Fixer became entangled in the weeds, and seemed to be in danger of sinking. Ellesmere, without thinking what he was about, made a hasty effort to save the dog, seized hold of him, but lost his own balance and fell out of the boat. In another moment Mildred gave me the end of her shawl to hold, which she had wound round herself, and sprang out too. The sensible diplomatist lost no time in throwing his weighty person to the other side of the boat. The two boatmen did the same. But for this move the boat would, in all probability, have capsized, and we should all have been lost. Mildred was successful in clutching hold of Ellesmere; and Milverton and I managed to haul them close to the boat and to pull them in. Ellesmere had not relinquished hold of Fixer. All this happened, as such accidents do, in almost less time than it takes to describe them. And now came another dripping creature splashing into the boat; for Master Walter, who can swim like a duck, had plunged in directly he saw the accident, but too late to be of any assistance.

Things are now all right; and Ellesmere next day announces to his friends that Mildred and he are engaged. Two chapters, on *Government* and *Despotism* respectively—the latter, perhaps, from the nature of the subject and its exhaustive treatment, the most valuable essay in the volumes—give us the last thoughts of the Friends abroad; then we have a pleasant picture of

them all in Milverton's farm-yard, under a great sycamore, discoursing cheerfully of country cares. The closing chapter of the book is on *The Need for Tolerance*. It contains a host of thoughts which we should be glad to extract ; but we must be content with a wise saying of Milverton's :—

For a man who had been rigidly good to be supremely tolerant would require an amount of insight which seems to belong only to the greatest genius.

For we hardly sympathise with that which we have not in some measure experienced ; and the great thing, after all, which makes us tolerant of the errors of other men is the feeling that under like circumstances we should have ourselves erred in like manner ; or, at all events, the being able to see the error in such a light as to feel that there is that within ourselves which enables us at least to understand how men should in such a way have erred. The sins on which we are most severe are those concerning which our feeling is, that we cannot conceive how any man could possibly have done them. And probably such would be the feeling of a rigidly good man concerning every sin.

So we part for the present from our Friends, not without the hope of again meeting them. We have been listening to the conversation of living men ; and, in parting, we feel the regret that we should feel in quitting a kind friend's house after a pleasant visit, not, perhaps, to be renewed for many a day. And this is a changing world. We have been breathing the old atmosphere,

and listening to the old voices talking in the old way. We have had new thought and new truth, but presented in the fashion we have known and enjoyed for years. Happily, we can repeat our visit as often as we please, without the fear of worrying or wearying ; for we may open the book at will. And we shall hope for new visits likewise. Milverton will be as earnest and more hopeful ; Ellesmere will retain all that is good, and that which is provoking will now be softened down. No doubt by this time they are married. Where have they gone ? The continent is unsettled, and they have often already been there. Perhaps they have gone to Scotland ? No doubt they have. And perhaps before the leaves are sere we may find them out among the sea lochs of the beautiful Frith of Clyde, or under the shadow of Ben Nevis.

VI.

EDGAR ALLAN POE.*

WE must go back to the days of the early dramatists—of Marlowe, Dekker, Ford, Massinger, and Otway—before we shall find in the history of literature any parallel to the wild and morbid genius, and the reckless and miserable life and death of Edgar Allan Poe. Never was there a sadder story than that of his wayward and infatuated youth, his wasted opportunities, his estranged friends, his poverty-stricken manhood, his drunken degradation, his despairing efforts to reform, his gradual sinking into lower and lower depths of misery, till at last he died of *delirium tremens* in a hospital, at the age of thirty-eight. And his poetical genius, his extraordinary analytic power, his imagination that revelled in the realm of the awful, the weird, and the horrible, his utter lack of truth and honour, his inveterate selfishness, his inordinate vanity and insane folly,—all go to make a picture so strange and

* *The Works of the late Edgar Allan Poe : with a Memoir by Rufus Wilmot Griswold, and Notices of his Life and Genius by N. P. Willis and J. R. Lowell.* In Four Volumes. New York : 1856.

sad that it cannot easily be forgotten. We believe that this extraordinary man is but little known in this country; and we think our readers may be interested by a few pages given to some account of his life and works.

The American edition of Poe's works consists of four handsome volumes of five hundred pages each, which, as regards paper, printing, and binding, are very favourable specimens of transatlantic publishing. The first volume contains a memoir of Poe's life by Mr. Griswold, and notices of his genius by Mr. N. P. Willis and Mr. Lowell. Mr. Griswold gives us the severer estimate of Poe's life and character: Mr. Lowell and Mr. Willis appear anxious to say as much good of him as possible. There is something that relieves the dark colours in which Poe is usually depicted, in the brief notice of him by his mother-in-law, prefixed to the work. She says—

The late Edgar Allan Poe—who was the husband of my only daughter, the son of my eldest brother, and more than a son to myself, in his long-continued and affectionate observance of every duty to me—under an impression that he might be called suddenly from the world, wrote (just before he left his home in Fordham for the last time, on the 29th of June, 1849) requesting that the Rev. Rufus W. Griswold would act as his literary executor, and superintend the publication of his works—and that N. P. Willis, Esq., should write such observations upon his life and character as he might deem suitable to address to thinking men in vindication of his memory.

From this statement of Mrs. Clemm, and from a statement made by Francis Osgood, it seems that those who knew Poe best were witnesses of a more

amiable aspect of his character. There is, unhappily, only one account of the melancholy phase of it which was known to the public. We are told by Mr. Willis that the slightest indulgence in intoxicating liquor was sufficient to convert Poe into a thorough blackguard—that ‘with a *single glass* of wine his whole nature was reversed; the demon became uppermost, and, though none of the usual signs of intoxication were visible, his will was palpably insane.’ The only excuse which can be offered for much of Poe’s life is, that he was truly not a responsible agent. He was morally, though not intellectually, insane.

The father of Edgar Allan Poe, when a law student, eloped with an English actress named Elizabeth Arnold. After a time he married her. He became an actor, and acted along with his wife for six or seven years in various cities of the United States. At length his wife and he died, within a few weeks of each other, leaving two sons and a daughter utterly destitute. Edgar, their second child, was born at Baltimore in 1811. He was adopted by a wealthy merchant, one Mr. John Allan; and Mr. Allan having no children, young Poe was generally regarded as destined to succeed to his fortune. The child was beautiful, precocious, high-spirited. He could brook no opposition, and Mr. and Mrs. Allan foolishly humoured him in every way. In 1816 he accompanied them to England, and was left for four or five years at school at Stoke Newington. In one of his tales Poe gives a striking description of his life here:—

My earliest recollections of a school life are connected with a

large rambling Elizabethan house in a misty-looking village in England, where were a vast number of gigantic and gnarled trees, and where all the houses were excessively ancient. In truth, it was a dream-like and spirit-soothing place, that venerable old town. At this moment, in fancy, I feel the refreshing chilliness of its deeply-shadowed avenues, inhale the pure fragrance of its thousand shrubberies, and thrill anew with undefinable delight at the deep hollow note of the church bell, breaking each hour with sullen and sudden roar, upon the stillness of the dusky atmosphere in which the fretted Gothic steeple lay imbedded and asleep.

In 1822 he returned to America, and entered the University of Charlottesville. Here he was distinguished for ability, but still more for gambling, drunkenness, and other vices, which led to his being expelled. Mr. Allan had given him a very liberal allowance of money while at the University, but the reckless lad ran deeply in debt. He paid some large sums which he had lost in gambling with drafts upon Mr. Allan; and Mr. Allan having refused to pay these, the ungrateful young man wrote him an insulting letter, and set off for Europe with the avowed intention of joining the Greek army, which was at that time engaged in war with the Turks. He never reached Greece; but, after having disappeared for a year, he turned up at St. Petersburg, where the American Minister saved him from the penalties which he had incurred in some drunken brawl.

He came back once more to America; and Mr. Allan, with extraordinary forbearance, once more received him kindly; and as Poe now expressed a desire to enter the army, he procured him admission to the Military Academy. Experience had taught poor Poe

no wisdom ; and, persevering in his vicious practices, in ten months he was cashiered and expelled.

Mr. Allan's patience was not yet exhausted ; he again received the reckless scapegrace as a son. But there is a limit to all human endurance, and in a few months Poe was finally cast off by him. The first Mrs. Allan had died some time before, and Mr. Allan had married a young lady who, Poe assures us, might, as regards age, have been his grandchild. In that case, as Mr. Allan was just forty-eight, she must have been very young indeed. Poe's biographer insinuates that the last unpardonable provocation which led to Poe's final exclusion from Mr. Allan's house was in some way connected with this lady ; and the writer of an eulogium on Poe in an American newspaper says that the circumstances of the case

throw a dark shade on the quarrel and a very ugly light on Poe's character. We shall not insert the story, because it is one of those relations which we think, with Sir Thomas Browne, should never be recorded. For of sins heteroclital, and such as want name or precedent, there is oftentimes a sin even in their history. We desire no record of enormities : sins should be accounted new.

Perhaps it would have been better plainly to have stated wherein this last offence consisted. It is certain that the mysterious way in which the biography passes it by, as something too bad to be recorded, is calculated to damage Poe's reputation as much as any record of facts could do so. It is certain, too, that the offence was such as finally to exhaust the patience of a benefactor who had repeatedly forgiven every possible form of recklessness, debauchery, and insolence ; and when Mr.

Allan died in 1834 he left his fortune to his children by his second marriage, but not a farthing to Poe.

From the time that he was finally cast off by Mr. Allan, Poe sought to support himself by literature ; and the remainder of his life is the melancholy story of a hack-writer's struggle for existence. At an early age he had published a little volume of poetry, which ran through several editions ; but when he first began to depend upon his contributions to the periodical press he was very unsuccessful. He had not steadiness to persevere in spite of discouragement ; and he enlisted in the army as a common soldier. He was soon recognised by some officers who had been with him at the Military Academy, and efforts were made to get him a commission. Just as these promised to be successful it was found that he had deserted.

He disappeared for a while. After some months a prize was offered by the publisher of a Baltimore newspaper for the best tale. On the committee which was to award the prize meeting, the members of it were struck by the beauty of the handwriting of one of the tales offered in competition. And without reading any other of the manuscripts on which they were called to adjudicate, these upright and honourable judges resolved, in a mere whim, that the prize should be given to 'the first of geniuses who had written legibly.' The award was published on the 12th October, 1833 ; and the successful competitor proved to be Poe. Mr. Griswold's description of his appearance when he came to receive the prize gives us some notion of the state to which he had been reduced :—

Accordingly he was introduced ; the prize-money had not yet been paid ; and he was in the costume in which he had answered the advertisement of his good fortune. Thin, and pale even to ghastliness, his whole appearance indicated sickness and the utmost destitution. A well-worn frock-coat concealed the absence of a shirt, and imperfect boots disclosed the want of hose. But the eyes of the young man were luminous with intelligence and feeling, and his voice and conversation and manners all won upon the lawyer's regard. Poe told his history and his ambition ; and it was determined that he should not want means for a suitable appearance in society, nor opportunity for a just display of his abilities in literature. Mr. Kennedy accompanied him to a clothing store, and purchased for him a respectable suit, with changes of linen, and sent him to a bath, from which he returned with the suddenly regained style of a gentleman.

His newly found friends were much interested in him, and lost no opportunity of serving him. They procured him literary occupation sufficient for his support ; and in 1835 he was appointed editor of a journal published at Richmond in Virginia. Down to this time he was compelled by actual necessity to lead a sober life ; but upon receiving his first month's salary as editor he relapsed into his old habits. For a week, Mr. Griswold tells us, 'he was in a condition of brutish drunkenness,' and his dismissal followed. When he became sober he made many professions of repentance ; and Mr. White, the proprietor of the journal, agreed to give him another trial, with the understanding that 'all engagements on his part should cease the moment Poe got drunk.' Poe did get drunk at intervals, 'drinking till his senses were lost ;' but Mr. White struggled on with him for upwards of a year. At the end of

that time Poe was finally dismissed. While holding his precarious place at Richmond, and with a very scanty income, he had married his cousin, Virginia Clemm, an amiable and beautiful girl, but quite devoid of that firmness of character which was requisite in the wife of such a man.

He went from Richmond to Baltimore, and thence to Philadelphia and New York, trusting for support to his chances of success as a magazine writer and newspaper correspondent. In May, 1839, he became editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* of Philadelphia, and made a vigorous effort to begin a regular life. But moral stamina was entirely wanting, and before the close of summer he relapsed into his former courses, 'and for weeks was regardless of everything but a morbid and insatiable appetite for the means of intoxication.' The magazine was conducted in the most irregular way; its proprietor on several occasions returning from some days' absence from home, after the day of publication was past, to find the magazine unfinished and Poe senselessly drunk.

The story of Poe's connexion with several other periodicals might be told in the same words. In the autumn of 1844 he removed to New York. It was during his residence in Philadelphia that Mr. Griswold became acquainted with him. He says:—

Poe's manner, except during his fits of intoxication, was very quiet and gentlemanly; he was usually dressed with simplicity and elegance; and when once he sent for me to visit him, during a period of illness caused by a protracted and anxious watching at the side of his sick wife, I was impressed by the singular neatness and the air of refinement in his home. It was in a

small house, in one of the pleasant and silent neighbourhoods far from the centre of the town, and though slightly and cheaply furnished, everything in it was so tasteful, and so fitly disposed, that it seemed altogether suitable for a man of genius. For this, and for most of the comforts he enjoyed in his brightest as in his darkest years, he was chiefly indebted to his mother-in-law, who loved him with more than maternal devotion and constancy.

Poe arrived at New York with a high literary reputation. He had by this time written his most successful tales; and soon after coming to New York he published his remarkable poem, *The Raven*, of which Mr. Willis has said, that—

It is the most effective single example of fugitive poetry ever published in this country, and is unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift.

About this time he also wrote his well-known story entitled *The Facts in the case of M. Valdemar*, in which he gives a shockingly circumstantial and minute description of the use of mesmerism in the case of a dying man. This piece was translated into many languages, and caused much curious speculation in the philosophical world.

In October, 1845, he became the proprietor and editor of the New York *Broadway Journal*. His irregular habits rendered him quite unfit for such a position; and the last number of the journal was published at the close of the same year. He made some engagements to deliver public lectures, one to read a poem before the Boston Lyceum; but he was generally drunk when the period for fulfilling these

engagements arrived. We have some curious specimens of the tone in which literary criticism is conducted in America, in a controversy into which Poe got at this time with a certain Dr. Dunn English. Poe had published, as one of a series of sketches called *The Literati of New York City*, an article reviewing the career of Dr. English, which Mr. Griswold admits was 'entirely false in what purported to be its facts.' Dr. English retorted by publishing an account of Poe's life and character, very much to the disadvantage of the latter; and wound up his article by a declaration that upon several occasions he had given Poe a sound horse-whipping. Poe returned to the charge in a paper which a New York journal was found willing to publish, in which, among other elegances of phrase, he describes Dr. English's attack upon himself as '*oozing from the filthy lips of which a lie is the only natural language!*'

But Poe was now sinking fast into lower depths of infamy. Witness the following:—

On one occasion he borrowed fifty dollars from a distinguished literary woman of South Carolina, promising to return it in a few days. When he failed to do so, and was asked for a written acknowledgment of the debt that might be exhibited to the husband of the friend who had thus served him, he denied all knowledge of it, and threatened to exhibit a correspondence which he said would make the woman infamous, if she said anything more on the subject. Of course there never had been any such correspondence. But when Poe heard that a brother of the slandered party was in quest of him for the purpose of taking satisfaction, he sent for Dr. Francis, and induced him to carry to that gentleman his retraction and apology, with a statement, which seemed true enough at the moment, that Poe was out of his head.

And Mr. Griswold tells us that those familiar with Poe's career can recal too many similar anecdotes.

In the autumn of 1846 the *New York Express* contained an appeal to the public on behalf of Poe and his wife, who were now at Fordham, some miles from the city, in want of the common necessities of life. Mr. N. P. Willis seconded this appeal by a generous paper in the *Home Journal*; and the contributions which flowed in relieved Poe's necessities for the time. His wife died a few weeks later; and magazine writing, as before, occupied him till the beginning of 1848. Early in that year he delivered, before a brilliant auditory at New York, his extraordinary discourse upon the Cosmogony of the Universe, which he called *Eureka, a Prose Poem*. He utterly denied in it the value of the inductive philosophy, and proposed to construct a theory of nature which should be dictated merely by 'that divinest instinct, the sense of beauty.' His views, we need hardly say, in so far as they can be reduced to comprehensibility, are the most preposterous rubbish.

In August, 1849, Poe went from New York to Philadelphia. Here, for several days, he abandoned himself to excesses so shocking that his biographer leaves them to be imagined. Reduced to actual beggary, he asked in charity the means of leaving the city, and proceeded to Richmond, in Virginia. Here he seems to have awakened to the degradation of his position; and he made a last desperate effort to begin a new life. He joined a teetotal society, and for several weeks conducted himself with perfect propriety. He delivered

two lectures in several of the towns of Virginia. He became engaged to marry a lady whom he had known in his youth, and who certainly evinced much greater courage than discretion in forming an engagement so perilous ; and he wrote to his friends that he was about to settle for the remainder of his days amid the scenes where he had passed his youth. We give the conclusion of the miserable history in Mr. Griswold's words :—

On Thursday, the 4th of October, he set out for New York to fulfil a literary engagement, and to prepare for his marriage. Arriving in Baltimore, he gave his trunk to a porter, with directions to convey it to the cars which were to start in an hour or two for Philadelphia, and went into a tavern to obtain some refreshment. Here he met acquaintances who invited him to drink; all his resolutions and duties were forgotten; in a few hours he was in such a state as is commonly induced only by long-continued intoxication. After a night of insanity and exposure he was carried to an hospital, and there, on the evening of Sunday, the 7th of October, 1849, he died, at the age of thirty-eight years.

Thus perished one of the most singular geniuses which America has produced. From the very beginning of his career there seems to have been some insane infatuation upon him. He was the very ideal of a black sheep. He was bad and wretched throughout. Through his whole life there never was a time when, for more than two or three weeks, he promised to become anything better. His sky never brightened. We feel that it would have been his salvation to have been put under some external control ; he was not fit to be his own master. His will was in complete abeyance. Still, his genius ought not to be suffered to blind

us to his guilt. Among the vulgar victims of drunkenness there is probably not one who cannot declare, as truthfully as Poe could have declared, that he is absolutely a slave to that degrading vice, and that the most honest efforts cannot emancipate him. Let us be thankful that it does not rest with any human tribunal to decide how far such a man is responsible to eternal justice. It is plain that, as regards human laws, even the hereditary victim of an invincible tendency must be held as sufficiently free to be accountable.

There is nothing of the *lues Boswelliana* about Mr. Griswold. He states with the greatest frankness the sins and scandals of the man who entrusted to him the vindication of a memory which sorely needed vindicating, if it were possible. It is curious, indeed, how little pains the biographer takes to conceal the shortcomings of his hero. He appears to have felt that any attempt to do so would have been vain. He says—

De mortuis nil nisi bonum is a common and an honourable sentiment, but its proper application would lead to the suppression of the histories of half of the most conspicuous of mankind. In this case it would be impossible, on account of the notoriety of Mr. Poe's faults; and it would be unjust to the living, against whom his hands were always raised, and who had no resort but in his outlawry from their sympathies.

Mr. Griswold tells us that Poe was as deficient in literary honesty as in truthfulness in the ordinary relations of life. 'Some of his plagiarisms are scarcely paralleled for their audacity in all literary history.' Several of his most striking tales borrowed their entire

machinery from the writings of English authors. He got possession of a manuscript poem by Mr. Longfellow, and, much to the astonishment of that pleasing author, he published it, with some slight alteration, as his own. Longfellow having found fault with this appropriation, and having printed the piece with his own name, Poe, with extraordinary audacity, accused Longfellow of having stolen the poem from himself, and followed up the charge with 'malignant criticism for many years.' He must have presumed a good deal upon American ignorance of English literature, when he published as his own a good deal of the prose of Coleridge. But his most remarkable plagiarism consisted in publishing at Philadelphia, as original, a work on Conchology, which was a reprint, almost verbatim, of *The Text-book of Conchology*, by Captain Thomas Brown, printed in Glasgow in 1833. Such dishonesty rarely fails of being discovered. The book was received with such unmistakeable disapprobation that in a second edition Poe's name was withdrawn from the title-page, and his initials only affixed to the preface.

As a critic, Mr. Griswold recommends us to attach little weight to the opinions expressed by Poe :—

His criticisms are of value to the degree in which they are demonstrative ; but his unsupported assertions and opinions were so apt to be influenced by friendship or enmity, by the desire to please or the fear to offend, or by his constant ambition to surprise, or to produce a sensation, that they should be received in all cases with distrust of their fairness. A volume might be filled with literary judgments by him as antagonistic and inconsistent as the sharpest antitheses.

Poe's vanity was extraordinary. He preserved with care everything that was published respecting himself and his works, and all letters of a complimentary character. In 1843 he wrote for a Philadelphia newspaper a sketch of his own life, 'many parts of which,' says Mr. Griswold, 'are untrue.' In particular, it contained several laudatory remarks upon Poe's writings, purporting to be by Mr. Washington Irving and Miss E. B. Barrett, now Mrs. Browning. It is melancholy to think that this laudatory character was given them by grossly perverting them from the sense in which Mrs. Browning and Mr. Irving wrote. Mrs. Browning had written to Poe that her husband *was struck much* by the rhythm of *The Raven*; poor Poe published, as an extract from Mrs. Browning's letter, that 'Mr. Browning *is enthusiastic in his admiration of the rhythm.*' To such wretched shifts did this unhappy genius stoop, in the hope of adding to his reputation.

Mr. Griswold sums up his account of Poe in the following words:—

He was at all times a dreamer, dwelling in ideal realms, in heaven or in hell, peopled with the creatures and accidents of his brain. He walked the streets, in madness or melancholy, with lips moving in indistinct curses, or with eyes upturned in passionate prayer (never for himself, for he felt, or professed to feel, that he was already damned, but) for their happiness who at the moment were the objects of his idolatry; or with his glances introverted to a heart gnawed with anguish, and with a face shrouded in gloom, he would brave the wildest storms, and all night, with drenched garments and arms beating the winds and rains, would speak as if to spirits that at such times only could be evoked by him from the Aidenn, close by whose portals his

disturbed soul sought to forget the ills to which his constitution subjected him—close by the Aidenn where were those he loved—the Aidenn which he might never see, but in fitful glimpses, as its gates opened to receive the less fiery and more happy natures whose destiny to sin did not involve the doom of death.

We have said we believe that Poe is little known or appreciated on this side of the Atlantic ; but in America there appears to be perfect unanimity of opinion both as to the nature and the rank of his genius. He was a true poet, though he wrote but little poetry ; and his more successful pieces in verse produce an impression akin to that produced by nearly all his prose. His power was confined almost entirely to the region of the awful, the mysterious, and the horrible ; and it seems as if his works, in their tone and colouring, were the faithful reflection of his own ordinary mood and order of thought. We know that, in many cases, the tone of a man's writings is no index whatever to his ordinary temperament. It is trite now-a-days to say that some of the most laughter-moving authors have been very melancholy men ; while some writers, whose works are distinguished by the most overdrawn sentiment, have been extremely prosaic in their real life. The author of *The Man of Feeling* was one of the hardest-headed of Scotch lawyers ; and when Goethe wrote *The Sorrows of Werter*, he had a keen eye to business, and was extremely fond of a good dinner. But in the case of Poe there seems to have been a real consistency between the tone of his writings and that of his usual feeling and thought. The dreary, ghastly, and appalling fancies of which his tales are for the most part made

up seem to have been a faithful reflection of his own dreary, ghastly, and appalling thoughts.

We have said that he wrote but little poetry. He was compelled by the exigencies of his life to produce such literary material as might procure the daily bread. He wrote verse very slowly, and his best poems are finished with extraordinary care; though the wonderful flow of his rhythm has nothing of the constraint of visible elaboration. It is curious to observe his anxiety to do away the impression that his verse was composed under the influence of anything like poetic inspiration. He gives us, in one of his prose pieces, a most minute account of the process by which he built up his most popular poem, *The Raven*. It is so seldom that a poet is found willing to admit his readers behind the scenes, and to explain to them the nature of the machinery by which his effects are produced, that we shall give some account of this paper, which is called *The Philosophy of Composition*.

Poe appears desirous to exhibit every cord and pulley, every sheet of daubed canvas, and every trap-door in his theatre; and to assure us that the sulphureous glare thrown over the whole picture is nothing more than a red light in a sceneshifter's hand:—

For my own part (he says) I have no desire that it should be understood that I compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition; nor have I at any time the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and since the interest of an analysis or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a

breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select *The Raven*, as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition; that the work proceeded step by step, to its completion, with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

We shall give the several steps of the process by which, as its author assures us, *The Raven* was turned out.

First, for certain reasons not mentioned, he was particularly anxious to write a poem which should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

The question then came to be, How long should a poem be, in order to its producing the greatest possible impression? The conclusion was, that it should be so brief as to be easily read at a sitting; more minutely, that it ought to consist of about a hundred lines. *The Raven* actually consists of a hundred and eight.

The next question was, What *sort* of impression was most likely to be most generally and deeply felt? And the conclusion come to was, that for many reasons, stated somewhat prolixly, it must be an impression of sadness; the poem must be of a melancholy tone.

The poet next considered whether there was any 'artistic piquancy' that might be introduced into the structure of the proposed poem, with the view of intensifying its effect; and, after some reflection, he concluded that there was nothing which was so suitable for this purpose as the employment of the *refrain*.

For full effect, the *refrain* must be brief; and that

its application might be varied, while literally it remained unaltered, it was convenient that it should consist of a single word. The use of the *refrain* implied that the poem should be divided into stanzas.

What was the *refrain* to be? It must be sonorous and emphatic. Then the long *o* is the most sonorous vowel, in connexion with *r* as the most producible consonant. These considerations immediately suggested the word *Nevermore*.

How was *Nevermore* to be brought in at the close of each stanza? It would be awkward to have a single word monotonously repeated by a reasonable being. The *refrain* must therefore be uttered by a non-reasoning creature capable of speech. A parrot was thought of first, but a raven appeared more in keeping with the tone of the intended poem.

Now, gathering up his conclusions, Poe tells us he found that he had arrived at 'the conception of a raven, a bird of ill omen, monotonously repeating the one word *Nevermore* at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines.'

Next came the inquiry, What is the saddest of all subjects? The answer was, Death. And when is this melancholy subject most poetical? When most closely allied to Beauty. The subject of the poem must therefore be the death of a beautiful woman. And, as a further step, a bereaved lover is the fittest person to speak on such a subject.

Combine now the ideas of a lover lamenting his mistress, and a raven repeating continuously *Never-*

more. Let the lover begin by a commonplace query, to which the raven should thus answer : then a query less commonplace : then another query ; till at last, half in superstition and half in self-torture, he goes on to put questions whose solution he has passionately at heart, 'receiving a frenzied pleasure in so modelling his questions as to obtain from the expected *Nevermore* the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow.' The last uttered *Nevermore* must involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair. And at this point in the induction, Poe assures us he first 'put pen to paper,' and wrote the stanza:—

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both
adore—

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden, whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels name Lenore?'
Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore!'

This stanza was to form the climax of the poem ; and no other was permitted to be so vigorous.

Originality in the rhythm and metre was also aimed at. And the author flattered himself that 'nothing even remotely approaching' the stanza of *The Raven* 'has ever been attempted.'

Where were the Raven and the lover to meet ? Not in the fields, for '*circumscription of space* is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident ;—it has the force of a frame to a picture.' The meeting must be in the lover's chamber, which must be richly furnished.

The Raven must enter by the window. The night must be stormy. The bird must alight on a bust of Pallas—for contrast of marble and plumage,—because the lover is a scholar,—and because the name *Pallas* sounds well.

The narrative part of the poem being completed, two concluding stanzas are added, which serve to cast a meaning upon all that has gone before. The Raven becomes emblematical; ‘but it is not till the last line of the last stanza that the intention of making him emblematical of *mournful and never-ending remembrance* is permitted distinctly to be seen:’

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the
 floor;
And my soul *from out that shadow* that lies floating on the floor
 Shall be lifted—never more!

Had Poe been a person so reliable that we could feel assured that such was indeed the genesis of this celebrated poem, there would be much interest in the account of it which he gives us. For although it by no means follows that the process by which the mind of one man of genius matures a fine work, from the dawn of its first crude conception to the hour when it is finally turned out, *totus, teres, et rotundus*, shall be the same as that by which another man of equal genius should produce a similar piece of work; still it would be curious to know, from the confession of an author as intensely truthful as Dr. Arnold, for instance, how

it was that some admirable poem which bears with it all the marks of the true poetic inspiration was conceived, condensed, and elaborated. Unfortunately, in Poe's case we have not the slightest assurance that there is a syllable of truth in the long story he has told us, beyond that which may be afforded by the story's internal evidence of truthfulness. It is quite certain that if he thought it likely to 'create a sensation' in the public mind, Poe would have related the particulars with equal circumstantiality although they had been entirely false. We must rest, therefore, altogether on the internal evidence which may be afforded by the narrative itself: and it appears to us that the ostentatious parade of reasons,—the affectation of strict logical sequence in all the steps of the process of manufacturing the poem,—are characteristics directly the contrary of those which we might expect in a true narrative, and bear a most suspicious resemblance to those of the highly circumstantial fictitious tales which proceeded from Poe's pen. The story, in short, is psychologically absurd and improbable in itself; and it derives no weight from the author's character, which may countervail its own unlikelihood. We believe that Poe, like all other authors, would have found it extremely hard to lay down the progressive steps by which any of his works was matured.

We believe that nothing can be more anomalous or fortuitous than the manner in which this end is reached in various cases: the conception sometimes breaking sharply and suddenly upon the mental view, and at other times first looming indistinctly as a mountain

through morning mist, and gradually settling into vivid outline and detail.

There is a good deal of mannerism in Poe's versification. He is very fond of making use of the *refrain*; and he sometimes lingers on the same lines and cadences in a way which palls upon the ear. The poem entitled *The Bells* sets out with a peculiar music of its own; but before its close it has degenerated into something almost like nursery rhymes. Here is its first stanza:—

Hear the sledges with the bells—
 Silver bells!
 What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
 How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
 In the icy air of night!
 While the stars that oversprinkle
 All the heavens seem to twinkle
 With a crystalline delight;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the tintinnabulation that so musically swells
 From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
 From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

The second stanza is given to wedding bells, the third to alarum bells, the fourth to bells tolled for the dead. It will require an admiration of Poe's poetry more enthusiastic than ours to discern anything but jingle and absurdity in the latter lines of this fourth verse. The 'King of the Ghouls,' it appears, 'dances and yells'

To the throbbing of the bells,
 Of the bells, bells, bells,—
 To the sobbing of the bells;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 As he knells, knells, knells,

In a happy Runic rhyme,
To the rolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells,
To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells,—

To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

The flow of all Poe's verses is remarkable for ease and gracefulness: it is hardly ever hampered by the difficulties of rhyme and rhythm which exist to a great degree in the metres of which he makes use. The stanzas which we have already quoted from *The Raven* have afforded those readers who are not familiar with the poem some notion of the singular character of its measure. We shall quote another specimen of it:—

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour:
Nothing farther then he uttered; not a feather then he fluttered,—

Till I scarcely more than muttered, 'Other friends have flown before,—

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before.'

Then the bird said, 'Nevermore.'

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
'Doubtless,' said I, 'what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master, whom unmerciful disaster
Followed fast and followed faster, till his songs one burden bore,—

Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore,
Of "Never, Nevermore."'

Of the four large volumes which contain Poe's works, only a small portion of *one* is taken up by his poetry. *That* occupies no more than one hundred pages out of two thousand. The first volume consists

of tales : the second contains the poetry, *Eureka*, one or two critical papers, and tales : the third volume is occupied by short critical sketches of almost all the authors of America, and of a few English authors, among whom are Macaulay, Dickens, Lever, and Mrs. Browning. The fourth volume contains a most shocking and repulsive tale of shipwreck and starvation at sea, entitled *Arthur Gordon Pym*, and more tales of a similar character to those in the preceding volumes. *Arthur Gordon Pym* is Poe's only attempt at a narrative of any length.

Mr. Griswold has forewarned us not to attach much weight to any of Poe's critical opinions ; and a perusal of his critical essays leads us to the belief that his ability did not at all lie in that way. They are almost entirely taken up by minute verbal fault-finding : there is hardly anything like the discussion of principles ; and many of the papers are evidently dictated by personal spite, and afford us a very unfavourable notion of the tone of American journalism. It is to be hoped that Poe's writings are not a fair specimen of the courtesy, or lack of courtesy, with which literary men across the Atlantic are wont to speak or write of one another. Of the editor of a rival magazine Poe remarks—

Mr. Brown had, for the motto on his magazine cover, the words of Richelieu,

Men call me cruel,—
I am not ;—I am *just*.

Here the two monosyllables 'an ass' should have been appended. They were no doubt omitted through one of those d——d typographical blunders which, through life, have been at once the bane and antidote of Mr. Brown.—(Vol. iii. pp. 103-4.)

Equally unsatisfactory are the glimpses of American manners with which these critical papers furnish us. The following is Poe's account of a certain John W. Francis, whom Poe evidently regarded as a very Chesterfield :—

His address is the most genial that can be conceived—its *bonhomie* irresistible. He never waits for an introduction to anybody; slaps a perfect stranger on the back, and calls him 'doctor' or 'learned Theban;' pats every lady on the head, and (if she be pretty and *petite*) designates her by some such title as 'My Pocket Edition of the Lives of the Saints!'

But Poe's great power lay in writing tales, which rank in a class by themselves, and have their characteristics strongly defined. They inculcate no moral lesson; they delineate no character; they are utterly away from nature or experience: their sole end is to interest and excite; and this end is aimed at for the most part by the use of all the appliances of horror. They are sometimes extremely coarse in taste, though never impure in morality. They are often calculated to jar on all human feeling; and when read they leave an indescribably *eerie* and strange impression upon the mind. Yet they possess such interest as spell-binds the reader; and if read alone and late at night, we venture to say that one could as readily shake off the nightmare as pause in the middle of one of these appalling narratives. There are some humorous tales, which are generally very unsuccessful; though the effect of the serious is often heightened by the infusion of a grotesque and maniac mirth. Monk Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe are nowhere in the race with

Poe. His imagination was so vivid that he appears to have *seen* all the horrors he describes ; and he sets them before his readers with such terrible graphic power that no nervous person should read his works except by broad daylight, and with a whole family in the room. He gives all his narratives an extraordinary veri-similitude by a circumstantiality of detail which surpasses that of *Robinson Crusoe* or *Sir Edward Seaward* ; and although the relation is almost always extravagant and impossible, one needs occasionally to pause and recollect, to avoid being carried away by the air of truthfulness and simplicity with which the story is told. Sometimes the interest is made to depend on following up a close chain of reasoning ; and often we find that description of magnificence and that gloating over imaginary wealth which are not unusual in the writings of men possessing a rich fancy amid the *res angustæ domi*. And at all times the language in which the description or the narrative is carried on is almost unparalleled for its exquisite clearness, precision, and nerve.

We have already alluded to a piece entitled *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*, as one which excited great interest when it was published, and which was translated into almost all the languages of Europe. It is an example of the author's power of balancing an extraordinary and impossible narrative by an appearance of anxiety to tell the simple truth, and by minute circumstantiality in narrating it, which led to the story being very generally believed.

M. Valdemar, a friend of Poe, was in the last stage

of consumption. For some months Poe had been anxious for an opportunity of mesmerising some person in the act of death ; and having told this to M. Valdemar, the latter at once agreed that the operation might be tried upon himself, and promised to send a message to Poe twenty-four hours before the time announced by the physicians as that of his decease.

One day Poe received a note from M. Valdemar that he could not hold out beyond to-morrow midnight. He immediately hastened to the dying man's chamber. This was on Saturday evening, and the medical men declared that M. Valdemar would probably die about midnight on Sunday. Valdemar was still desirous of being mesmerised ; and it was arranged that Poe, with a friend (one Mr. Theodore L——l), should come to him on Sunday evening at eight o'clock. This friend was to take notes of all that should pass.

On Sunday evening, accordingly, M. Valdemar was mesmerised, being then in the last stage of physical exhaustion. The process was completed *about midnight*. He remained in the mesmeric state till three a.m. Poe then asked him, 'M. Valdemar, are you asleep?' In an audible whisper the answer was returned, 'Asleep now,—I am dying.' The same answer was given still more faintly a few minutes later. The physicians thought it best that he should remain in this tranquil state until death should supervene, which they anticipated in a few minutes.

Poe repeated his question, 'Are you asleep?' Even as he spoke a ghastly change passed over Valdemar,

which is described with horrible minuteness. He was dead; and his friends were turning away, leaving him to the nurses.

Concluding that he was dead, we were turning away, when a strong vibratory motion was observable in the tongue. This continued for perhaps a minute. At the expiration of that period there issued from the distended and motionless jaws a voice—such as it would be madness in me to attempt describing. There are, indeed, two or three epithets which might be considered as applicable to it in part; I might say, for example, that the sound was harsh and broken and hollow; but the hideous whole is indescribable, for the simple reason that no similar sounds have ever jarred upon the ear of humanity. There were two particulars, nevertheless, which I thought then, and still think, might fairly be stated as characteristic of the intonation—as well adapted to convey some idea of its unearthly peculiarity. In the first place, the voice appeared to reach our ears—at least mine—from a vast distance, or from some deep cavern within the earth. In the second place, it impressed me as gelatinous or glutinous matters impress the sense of touch.

I have spoken both of sound and of voice. I mean to say that the sound was one of distinct—of even wonderfully-thrillingly distinct—syllabification. M. Valdemar *spoke*—obviously in reply to the question I had propounded to him a few minutes before. I had asked him, it will be remembered, if he still slept. He now said—

‘Yes—no—I *have been* sleeping; and now—and now—I *am dead*.’

No person present even affected to deny, or attempted to repress, the unutterable, shuddering horror which these few words, thus uttered, were so well calculated to convey. Mr. L—— swooned. The nurses immediately left the chamber, and could not be induced to return.

In this condition, dead, yet still held in a strange connection with Poe by the mesmeric influence, M.

Valdemar continued for *seven months*. Death was so far arrested. At the end of that time it was resolved to awaken him. Poe made the necessary passes, and then said—

‘M. Valdemar, can you explain to us what are your feelings or wishes now?’

There was an instant return of the hectic circles on the cheeks; the tongue quivered, or rather rolled violently in the mouth, though the jaws and lips remained rigid as before. At length the same hideous voice which I have already described broke forth:—

‘For God’s sake, quick! quick!—put me to sleep,—or quick! waken me!—quick!—*I say to you that I am dead!*’

I was thoroughly unnerved, and for an instant remained undecided what to do. At first I made an endeavour to recompose the patient; but failing in this, I retraced my steps, and earnestly struggled to awaken him. In this attempt I soon saw that I should be successful, and I am sure that all in the room were prepared to see the patient awaken.

For what really occurred, however, it is quite impossible that any human being could have been prepared.

As I rapidly made the mesmeric passes, amid ejaculations of ‘Dead! dead!’ actually *bursting* from the tongue, and not from the lips, of the sufferer, his whole frame at once—within the space of a single minute, or even less—shrunk, crumbled, actually rotted away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before that whole company, there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putrescence.

One of Poe’s most striking tales is entitled *A Descent into the Maelström*. It is told, like most of his stories, in the first person. In company with an old Norwegian fisherman, the writer tells us he climbed to the top of an enormous crag upon the coast of Lofoden, commanding an extensive seaview:—

We had caught no glimpse of the sea until it had burst upon

us from the summit. As the old man spoke, I became aware of a loud and gradually increasing sound, like the moaning of a vast herd of buffaloes upon an American prairie; and at the same moment I perceived that what seamen call the *chopping* character of the ocean beneath us was rapidly changing into a current which set to the eastward. Even while I gazed, this current acquired a monstrous velocity. In five minutes the whole sea, as far as Vurrgh, was lashed into ungovernable fury; but it was between Moskoe and the coast that the main uproar held its sway. Here the vast bed of the waters, seamed and scarred into a thousand conflicting channels, burst suddenly into a frenzied convulsion—heaving, boiling, hissing—gyrating in gigantic and innumerable vortices, and all whirling and plunging on to the eastward with a rapidity which water never elsewhere assumes, except in precipitous descents.

In a few minutes more there came over the scene another radical alteration. The general surface grew somewhat more smooth, and the whirlpools one by one disappeared, while prodigious streaks of foam became apparent where none had been seen before. These streaks at length, spreading out to a great distance and entering into combination, took unto themselves the gyratory motion of the subsided vortices, and seemed to form the germ of another more vast. Suddenly—very suddenly—this assumed a distinct and definite existence, in a circle of more than a mile in diameter. The edge of the whirl was represented by a broad belt of gleaming spray; but no particle of this slipped into the mouth of the terrific funnel, whose interior, as far as the eye could fathom it, was a smooth, shining, and jet-black wall of water, inclined to the horizon at an angle of some forty-five degrees, speeding dizzily round and round with a swaying and sweltering motion, and sending forth to the winds an appalling voice, half shriek, half roar, such as not even the mighty cataract of Niagara ever lifts up in its agony to heaven.

The mountain trembled to its very base, and the rock rocked. I threw myself upon my face, and clung to the scant herbage in an excess of nervous agitation.

‘This,’ said I, at length, to the old man—‘this *can* be nothing else than the great whirlpool of the Maelström.’

The old man goes on to tell how he himself, in a little schooner, with two of his brothers, had been sucked into this tremendous whirl, the description of which given by Poe is, we need hardly tell our readers, very greatly exaggerated. It appears that at the turn of the tide the whirl ceases for a few minutes, and venturesome fishermen run the risk, when the wind is fair and strong, of pushing right across the Maelström. A great round is thus saved, and the finest fish are taken in extraordinary quantity. The old man's watch had upon one occasion run down, and miscalculating the time, he and his brothers steered their little craft right upon the whirlpool. A terrible storm had uprisen suddenly, and the ström was in its most fearful power.

After flying before the wind, the schooner, on reaching the belt of foam which surrounds the whirl, suddenly turned off to one side, and flew round with tremendous velocity.

How often we made the circuit of the belt it is impossible for me to say. We careered round and round for perhaps an hour, flying rather than floating, getting gradually more and more into the centre of the surge, and then nearer and nearer to its horrible inner edge. At length we gave a wild lurch to starboard, and rushed headlong into the abyss. I muttered a hurried prayer to God, and thought all was over.

As I felt the sickening sweep of the descent I had instinctively tightened my hold upon the barrel, and closed my eyes. For some seconds I dared not open them—while I expected instant destruction, and wondered that I was not already in my death-struggles with the water. But moment after moment elapsed. I still lived. The sense of falling had ceased; and the motion of the vessel seemed much as it had been before while in the

belt of foam, with the exception that she now lay more along. I took courage and looked once again upon the scene.

Never shall I forget the sensations of awe, horror, and admiration, with which I gazed about me. The boat appeared to be hanging, as if by magic, midway down, upon the interior surface of a funnel vast in circumference, prodigious in depth, and whose perfectly smooth sides might have been mistaken for ebony, but for the bewildering rapidity with which they spun round, and for the gleaming and ghastly radiance which they shot forth, as the rays of the full moon, from the circular rift among the clouds which I have already described, streamed in a flood of golden glory along the black walls, and far away down into the innermost recesses of the abyss.

The rays of the moon seemed to search out the very bottom of the profound gulf; but still I could make out nothing distinctly, on account of a thick mist in which everything there was enveloped. This mist or spray was no doubt occasioned by the clashing of the great walls of the funnel, as they all met together at the bottom; but the yell that went up to the heavens out of that abyss I dare not venture to describe.

Looking about me upon the wide waste of liquid ebony in which we were thus borne, I perceived that our boat was not the only object in the embrace of the whirl. Both above and below us were visible fragments of vessels, large masses of building timber and trunks of trees, with many smaller articles, such as pieces of house furniture, broken boxes, barrels and staves. I have already described the unnatural curiosity which had taken the place of my original terrors. I now began to watch with a strange interest the numerous things that floated in our company. I *must* have been delirious, for I even sought *amusement* in speculating upon the relative velocities of their several descents to the foam below. 'This fir-tree,' I found myself at one time saying, 'will certainly be the next thing to plunge and disappear;' and then I was disappointed to find that the wreck of a Dutch merchant ship overtook it and went down before it.

While in this position the old fisherman began to observe that the lighter objects in the whirl, such as

casks, were much longer in sliding down the slope of the funnel than heavy objects, such as the schooner. This afforded him some hope of escape. He therefore lashed himself to a cask and threw himself into the water, hoping that he might not be plunged into the abyss below before the turn of the tide :—

The result was precisely what I had hoped it would be. It might have been an hour or thereabout, after my quitting the schooner, when, having descended to a vast distance below me, it made three or four wild gyrations in rapid succession, and, bearing my loved brother with it, plunged headlong, at once and for ever, into the chaos of foam below. The barrel to which I was attached sunk very little farther than half the distance between the bottom of the gulf and the place where I leaped overboard, when a great change took place in the character of the whirlpool. The slope of the sides of the vast funnel became momentarily less and less steep. The gyrations of the whirl grew, gradually, less and less violent. By degrees, the froth and the mist disappeared, and the bottom of the gulf seemed slowly to uprise. The sky was clear, the wind had gone down, and the full moon was setting radiantly in the west, when I found myself on the surface of the ocean, in full view of the shores of Lofoden, and above the spot where the pool of the Moskoeström *had been*.

Of all Poe's tales, the one which he himself esteemed most highly is that entitled *Ligeia*. It is one of several which stand distinguished from his other tales by a peculiar character. In it, as in all his more powerful writings, the effect left on the mind is a feeling of awe and horror ; but this feeling is in *Ligeia* produced by *metaphysical* means. Instead of the physical terror of the story of M. Valdemar, or the circumstantial dread of such a tale as the *Descent into the Maelström*, we find in *Ligeia* and several other pieces strange and

daring plunges into regions of speculation which thrill us with a sense of the *forbidden*,—as though prying into Nature's mysteries in a fashion not meet for man. The story is as follows : it is told, like most of the others, in the first person ; the writer apparently having lost his own identity in the temporary conviction of the truth of what he tells.

Accordingly the constantly-recurring *I* had married the Lady Ligeia, having met her in some old decaying city on the Rhine. There was always something strange about her : her husband never knew what was her paternal name. Her eyes had an expression which suggested, in a fashion which bewildered, dim remembrances of some pre-existent state. Her beauty and learning were equally great : but her main characteristic was her tremendous strength of *will*.

She gradually faded, in early youth ; but this wonderful volition appeared to struggle at every step with advancing death. She 'wrestled with the advancing shadow with a desperate fierceness of resistance.' She was resolved that she would not leave her husband ; she was determined that she *would not die*. Death came, notwithstanding ; but in the last moment of life she sprang upon her feet and shrieked aloud those strangely suggestive words of Joseph Glanvill, '*Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor to death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*' She sank down, exhausted ; and as she breathed her last sigh, her husband heard a low murmur come from her lips. He bent his ear to them, and heard the same words repeated.

The husband sank into a morbid state, described with great power; but after some time he again married. The dwelling where he and his wife lived, and the appearance of their chamber, are described with more than Poe's usual power of exciting a creeping sensation of awe. Mysterious sounds and footsteps were heard about that chamber. Strange shadows from invisible figures were cast upon its floor. After several mysterious fits of illness the second wife died, and her husband watched at night beside her shrouded form.

As he sat he heard a low sob come from the bed of death. He watched in an agony of superstitious terror. After some minutes a feeble tinge of colour began to flush the dead face. The husband thought that life was not gone, and used every means of restoring it. But in a very short time all signs of life had disappeared, and the body lay more dead in appearance than ever.

An hour passed, and a sigh was again heard from the bed. The lips trembled and parted. A partial glow came over the forehead and cheek; the heart feebly beat. The husband chafed and bathed temples and hands, and used every exertion which no little medical reading could suggest. But in vain. Suddenly the colour fled, and the pulsation ceased; and in an instant the body assumed the appearance of that which has for many days been buried.

Through that unspeakably horrible night, 'time after time, until near the period of the grey dawn, this hideous drama of revivification was repeated; each

terrific relapse was only into a sterner and apparently more irredeemable death ; each agony wore the aspect of a struggle with some invisible foe ; and each struggle was preceded by I know not what of wild change in the personal appearance of the corpse.'

Once more, as dawn approached, rising from a more appalling and hopeless dissolution than any before it, the dead stirred with a more vigorous life. The hues of life flushed up, the limbs relaxed ; and, ' rising from the bed, tottering with feeble steps, with closed eyes, and with the manner of one bewildered in a dream, the thing that was enshrouded advanced boldly and palpably into the middle of the apartment.' We give the rest in the writer's words :—

I trembled not ; I stirred not ; for a crowd of unutterable fancies connected with the air, the stature, the demeanour, of the figure, rushing through my brain, had paralysed—had chilled me into stone. I stirred not, but gazed upon the apparition. There was a mad disorder in my thoughts—a tumult unappeasable. Could it indeed be the *living* Rowena who confronted me ? Could it indeed be Rowena *at all*—the fair-haired, blue-eyed Lady Rowena ? Then, *why* should I doubt it ? The bandage lay heavily about the mouth ; but then might it not be the mouth of the breathing Lady of Tremaine ? And the cheeks,—there were the roses as in her noon of life—yet these might be the fair cheeks of the living Lady of Tremaine. But *had she then grown taller since her malady* ? What inexpressible madness seized me with that thought ? One bound, and I had reached her feet ! shrinking from my touch she let fall from her head, unloosened, the ghastly cerements which had confined it, and then streamed forth into the rushing atmosphere of the chamber huge masses of long and dishevelled hair ; *it was blacker than the raven wings of midnight.* And now slowly opened the *eyes* of the figure that stood before me. ' Here, then, at least,' I shrieked

aloud, 'can I never, can I never be mistaken; these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes of my lost love—of the Lady—of the *Lady Ligeia*!'

There is certainly something very thrilling in the minute description in this tale of the persevering and awful struggle of the *Will* to break the trammels of death, and in the strange gradual transformation of the second wife into the first. Poe prided himself much upon the psychical ingenuity of the conception. He tells us he regarded the piece as containing the highest-class thought which he had ever written.

Our space forbids that we should give any further specimens of the wild and strange fictions which proceeded from the dark and distempered imagination of this miserable but extraordinary genius. Should any of our readers desire to extend their acquaintance with the works of Poe, we may refer them to the pieces entitled *The Masque of the Red Death*, *The Tell-tale Heart*, *William Wilson*, and *The Fall of the House of Usher*, as specimens of his power in the realm of the eerie and fearful; and to the pieces entitled *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Gold-bug*, *Hans Pfaal*, and *The Purloined Letter*, as specimens of tales which draw their effect from their circumstantiality of detail and the closeness with which they follow up a train of reasoning. *Hans Pfaal* is the account of a voyage to the moon, given with such an appearance of truthful simplicity, and with such an apparent earnestness of desire to explain the precise *rationale* of every step in the process which brought the voyager to his destination, that one can almost fancy that the story

might, in many quarters, receive implicit credit. The sketches called *The Domain of Arnheim* and *Landor's Cottage* are remarkable examples of Poe's power of life-like description.

On the whole, it appears to us that, whether we regard the character of Poe's genius, or the nature of his career, we are looking upon as sad and strange a phenomenon as can be found in literary history. Principle he seems to have had none. Decision of character was entirely lacking. (His envy of those more favoured by fortune than himself amounted to raging ferocity.) He starved his wife, and broke her heart. He estranged the friends who were most firmly resolved to hold by him. He foully slandered his best benefactors. He had no faith in man or woman. His biographer tells us that 'he regarded society as composed altogether of villains.' He had no sympathy, no honour, no truth. And we carry with us from the contemplation of the entire subject the sad recollection of a powerful intellect, a most vivid imagination, an utterly evil heart, and a career of guilt, misery, and despair.

VII.

GEORGE STÉPHENSON AND THE RAILWAY.*

ONCE upon a time, the idea called up before the mind's eye of an Englishman by the name of a Railway, was that of a rickety and unèven track, consisting of two parallel bars of cast-iron, with a horse-path, deeply indented and never repaired, between these two iron bars. Along this track a wretched horse, probably blind and certainly lame, drew three or four rudely-constructed wagons a few miles from the coal-pit where they were filled, to the wharf where their contents were tilted on shipboard. Even at that day the advantages of the railway were manifest; for the poor animal already mentioned was able, without any considerable effort, to draw along this tram-road a burden four or five times as great as that which it could have drawn along an ordinary highway. Next there came a period when the steam-engine, at that time associated in the minds of most men with smoke, noise, and dirt, came to be employed to convey the wagons of coal

* *The Life of George Stephenson, Railway Engineer.* By Samuel Smiles. London: 1857.

from the fields of proprietors of an enterprising turn and with a taste for novelty. The engine made use of was extremely heavy and clumsy: it gave forth horrible screams as of a being in torment, the result of steam escaping at high pressure: it poured out volumes of smoke; and while it succeeded partially in dragging heavy weights, it succeeded thoroughly in disseminating along the track it followed all the benefits of immediate vicinity to the coal-pit it came from. It was, as far as dirt, smoke, and noise were concerned, a travelling coal-pit brought to the door of each house it passed. It blighted all the neighbouring fields with smoke: it alarmed horses and men by its unearthly noises and its unwieldy movements: it jolted and strained along at the rate of two and a half miles in the hour; and in some cases it was regularly attended by a team of horses, who were to draw it home when it broke down, which it did daily.

Such was the earliest type of the railway and the locomotive. Never was there contrast more complete than that between these things as they were forty years since, and as they are to-day. For the slow, awkward, dirty engine of former times, we have the elegant, smokeless, noiseless locomotive, so neat and ornamental with its burnished brass,—with all its parts playing so smoothly and exactly,—with its pace of fifty or sixty miles an hour,—ready to dash out into the bleak waste upon the dark winter night, no man dreaming that it will fail to bear him safely and swiftly over it,—coming in to the minute assigned by *Bradshaw* after a run of four hundred miles. And as for the railway

itself, it has changed from the old blighted track to a trim road between green slopes of cutting and over graceful viaducts of better than classical design; its station-houses along the way being pretty little cottages covered with flowers and evergreens; winding through parks and pleasure-grounds, where, if it be not too near, there is a positive beauty in the rapid flitting of the train of carriages among the clumps of wood, and the white vapour dying away after it is gone. And for the old *plateway* (for so it was called at first), laid down in the rudest way, and only on a dead level, we have now gigantic roads which hold right on in spite of all intervening obstacles,—piercing underneath the hills, flying over rivers and valleys, spanning across stormy arms of the sea,—the grandest triumphs of modern engineering skill. And while railway and locomotive have thus changed, an equal change has passed upon the burden they convey. Not that British Railways have ever quite forgotten their old freight—coal, once their only freight: but after all, the great feature in railway traffic is the conveyance of passengers. And among the millions who yearly avail themselves of the facilities afforded by the railway are numbered people of all sorts and conditions—from our good Queen, who flits through her country in the state carriage of a special train, to the poor working man or woman who pays a penny a mile for a seat in the third-class carriage of a parliamentary one. As for the moral effects of the railway in abolishing local prejudices and enlightening men's minds, we can only say that they are wholly incalculable.

252 *George Stephenson and the Railway.*

It was very fit that a life of George Stephenson should be written. It is mainly to his ingenuity and perseverance that Britain and the world owe the railway and the locomotive engine. For all practical purposes, he was the inventor of the locomotive ; and for many years he stood alone in his advocacy of its merits. He was regarded as a mischievous lunatic by men of science ; and even persons who had some confidence in him lamented that he should be guilty of the extravagant folly of maintaining that a locomotive engine might be made capable of travelling at a rate of ten, twelve, or sixteen miles an hour. But Stephenson was a sterling Englishman, and he never for a moment lost confidence in his great invention : he was not to be discouraged or put down ; and he lived to witness the triumph of the locomotive, and to be universally hailed as one of the most substantial benefactors of mankind. Apart from the interest which all thinking men must feel in tracing the career of a great public benefactor, there is a special interest in a life like that of Stephenson. We should like to see this biography in the hands of all our young men. One breathes a healthful, bracing atmosphere in reading this book. It sets before us a fine instance of success in life attained purely in the exercise of genuine qualities. There was no sham about George Stephenson. His character, his biographer remarks, ‘exhibits a striking combination of those sterling qualities which we are proud to regard as essentially English.’ His ingenuity and resolution were not more remarkable than his honesty, his kind-heartedness, his self-denial, his industry, his

modesty. He was a great and good man, and we can give his *Life* no higher praise than to say that it is worthy of its subject. Mr. Smiles is evidently so anxious to place the character and career of Stephenson justly before his readers that he quite forgets himself. We do not know how a biographer could do better. Mr. Smiles has produced a manly, unaffected book, which places Stephenson before us as he lived, and which well repays perusal.

On the north bank of the river Tyne, eight miles from Newcastle, stands a colliery village named Wylam. Like most colliery villages, it is a dirty, uninteresting place. At one end of the straggling street there is a brick tenement, with a roof of red tiles, with unplastered walls, and a floor of clay. This humble edifice is divided into four labourers' dwellings. Here George Stephenson was born on the 9th of June, 1781. His father, Robert Stephenson, commonly known as Old Bob, was fireman of the colliery steam-engine, and a man of excellent character and no small intelligence. His mother, Mabel Stephenson, was a woman of delicate constitution and nervous temperament, but she is still spoken of by the workers at Wylam as 'a rale canny body'—a phrase which Mr. Smiles assures us is 'about the highest praise of a woman which North-umbrians can express.' The wages of a fireman when in full employment did not exceed twelve shillings a week; and upon this income the worthy couple had to maintain a family of six children, of whom George was the second. They had a hard struggle to find food and raiment, and never had the means of sending any

of their children to school. George soon began to make himself useful, as a labouring man's children must. He carried out his father's dinner to him while at work, and helped to nurse his little brothers and sisters. One of his duties was to keep the younger children out of the way of the coal wagons, which were drawn by horses along a wooden tram-road before his father's door.

When George Stephenson was eight years old the family removed from Wylam to Dewley Burn. A widow, named Grace Ainslie, then occupied the farmhouse of Dewley. She kept a number of cows, which she was allowed to graze along the wagon-ways. She needed a boy to keep her cows out of the way of the wagons, and offered twopence a day as wages. George sought the post, and to his great joy was appointed to it. Here he had plenty of spare time, which he spent in birds'-nesting and in making steam-engines of clay, abundantly supplied with pipes made of hemlock stalks. By-and-by he got fourpence a day for hoeing turnips; and afterwards he was set to drive the gin-horse at Black Callerton Colliery, with eightpence a day. It was a great step of promotion when he was taken as an assistant fireman to his father at the Dewley engine. He attained this place at the age of fourteen; and long afterwards he used to tell how, when the owner of the colliery came round, he was wont to hide himself, lest he should be thought too little a boy to earn his daily shilling. His eldest brother, James, was also an assistant fireman; the younger brothers were pickers at the bank-tops; and the two girls helped their

mother at home. The united earnings of the family amounted to thirty-five or forty shillings a week ; but all provisions were in those days so dear that there was nothing to spare for luxuries. In December 1800 wheat cost one hundred and thirty shillings a quarter.

The Stephenson family moved from colliery to colliery as the coal became exhausted, remaining always within a few miles of Newcastle. George was uniformly distinguished for steadiness, sobriety, and hard work. His physical strength was extraordinary, and he delighted in athletic feats. He took great pains to understand the nature of the steam-engine : and to such good purpose that at seventeen he became engineman at Walbottle, his father working under him as fireman. At all leisure times he was accustomed to take his engine to pieces to clean it, and master its various parts ; and he gradually came to have that enthusiastic attachment to it which is very generally felt by ingenious men whose work is to watch and tend machinery. He had now twelve shillings a week, and he regarded himself as 'a man made for life.' Always anxious to improve, at the age of eighteen, when he had to attend his engine twelve hours a day, he went to school and learned to read. For threepence a week he received lessons in reading and spelling three nights a week. He also learned to write, and at nineteen could sign his name. But he especially excelled in arithmetic ; and he spent all his spare minutes by the engine-fire in working out upon a slate the problems which his master set him. He was very fond of

animals. He drove a small trade in rabbits of his own breeding ; he had robin-redbreasts which hopped about his engine ; and the sagacity of his dog, who daily brought him his dinner, was the talk of the entire neighbourhood.

In 1801 he was advanced to the responsible position of brakesman at Black Callerton Colliery. He was now at the age of twenty, a big, raw-boned, healthy lad ; sober, steady, and expert as a workman ; but no precocious genius. His wages were nearly a pound a week ; but, always thrifty and saving, he tried to increase his earnings by working at leisure hours. He began to mend shoes for his fellow-workmen, and became fairly proficient in the art. He was the more anxious to earn and save, because he had become attached to a respectable, amiable, and sensible girl, named Fanny Henderson, a servant at a neighbouring farmhouse ; and he sought the means of marrying her. Mr. Smiles tells us that—

Amongst his various mendings of old shoes at Callerton, George Stephenson was on one occasion favoured with the shoes of his sweetheart, Fanny Henderson, to sole. One can imagine the pleasure with which he would linger over such a piece of work, and the pride with which he would execute it. A friend of his, still living, relates that after finishing the shoes, he carried them about with him in his pocket on the Sunday afternoon, and that from time to time he would whip them out and hold them up to sight—the tiny little shoes that they were—exhibiting them with exultation to his friend, and exclaiming, ‘What a capital job he had made of them!’ Other lovers have carried about with them a lock of their fair one’s hair, a glove, or a handkerchief, but none could have been prouder of their cherished love-token than was George Stephenson of his Fanny’s shoes, which he

had just soled, and of which he had made such a 'capital job.'

By shoe-mending and self-denial at Callerton, Stephenson succeeded in saving his first guinea. He was very proud of it, and said that 'he was now a rich man.' He maintained his character for steadiness and sobriety; his surviving fellow-workmen testify that Stephenson never in his life was seen 'the worse for drink.' On the fortnightly holidays, while the other workmen were cock-fighting and drinking, he was musing over his engine, taking it to pieces, cleaning it, and always leaving it in thorough working order. His relaxation was a ramble through the fields seeking birds' nests. But though quiet and unobtrusive, he was not a *muff*; and the story is still told in the neighbourhood of a desperate fight between Stephenson and a certain bully, the terror of the neighbourhood, named 'Ned Nelson, the Fighting Pitman of Black Callerton.' The 'Fighting Pitman' mistook Stephenson's quietness for want of spirit, and, without provocation, threatened to kick him. But Stephenson, although no pugilist, held his own by determination and pluck, and gave the bully such a drubbing as had a most wholesome effect on his general demeanour.

With a little money, scraped together by industry and self-denial, Stephenson furnished in a very humble style a cottage at Willington Quay, on the Tyne, six miles below Newcastle. When everything had been prepared, he brought his young wife, Fanny Henderson, there. They were married in Newburn Church, on the 28th of November, 1802. After the ceremony

George and his wife rode to their home on a stout farm-horse, a distance of fifteen miles.

Thus married and settled, Stephenson remained steady and industrious as before. He was attentive to his engine through the day; and he sat in the evenings beside his wife in his little cottage, busy in making mechanical experiments, and in modelling machines. He spent much time in a fruitless endeavour after the perpetual motion. Learning by experience, he advanced from mending shoes to making them; and he grew skilful at making shoe-lasts. An event which happened about this time turned his industry to a more profitable channel. One day, in his absence, his cottage chimney took fire. The neighbours, in their zeal to extinguish the flames, poured buckets of water down the chimney. The flames were extinguished, but the house was soaked, and an eight-day clock, a highly-prized possession, was spoiled with steam and dust. The neighbours advised sending it to the clock-maker; but poor Stephenson grudged the expense. He tried to clean it himself, and succeeded to admiration. And from that time he drove a profitable trade as a clock-doctor.

While at Willington Quay, on the 16th of December, 1803, was born George Stephenson's only son, Robert. The kind-heartedness of the father, formerly expended on dogs and rabbits, now found a better object. In 1804 he became brakesman at Killingworth Colliery, seven miles north of Newcastle; and here, after a short time of married life, his wife died. It was a sad blow to a man of his strong affections, and it

paralysed him for the time: and we grieve to think that poor Fanny Henderson never knew how the names of her husband and her son would become known over the world. Soon after her death Stephenson went for about a year to Montrose to work at a colliery. He walked there and home again, with his kit upon his back; and he brought with him, on his return, twenty-eight pounds which he had saved. One night, on his homeward journey, footsore and weary, he besought a small farmer and his wife, at a little cottage on the Border, to allow him to lie down in the out-house on some straw. At first they refused; but afterwards they received him into the cottage, treated him kindly, and in the morning declined to receive any remuneration for his lodging, but asked him to remember them, and if he ever came that way to be sure and call again. He did not return that way till he was a great man; but he did not forget to 'call again.' He found the worthy couple grown old; and when he left them they had good reason to rejoice that they had spared George Stephenson a little clean straw.

When he reached Killingworth, on his return, he found that by an accident his aged father had lost his sight, and was reduced to great distress. His sons who were at home were as poor as himself. George instantly employed the savings of his weary journey and hard work in paying the old man's debts, and establishing him and his wife (George's mother) in a comfortable cottage near Killingworth. Here the old man lived for many years, entirely supported by his son,

quite blind, but cheerful to the last, and delighted to receive a visit from his grandson Robert.

Stephenson was taken on again as brakesman at Killingworth; but so disheartened was he about 1807-8 that he thought of emigrating to Canada. Speaking to a friend long afterwards of his feelings at this time, he said,—‘You know the road from my house at the West Moor to Killingworth. I remember when I went along that road I wept bitterly, for I knew not where my lot would be cast.’ He persevered, however, working at the colliery as before, mending clocks and making shoes, manufacturing shoe-lasts, and even cutting out the pitmen’s clothes for their wives to make up. It is said that to this day there are clothes worn at Killingworth which have been made after ‘Geordy Steevie’s cut.’ His reputation was greatly extended through his succeeding in setting to rights a pumping engine which had foiled the endeavours of all the neighbouring workmen to get it into working trim. For this he received ten pounds from the proprietor; he got into extensive practice as a curer of all the old wheezy pumping machines of the district, and many odd contrivances of his excited great wonder at Killingworth. His cottage was full of models of all sorts. He taught the women to connect their cradles with the smoke-jack, and make them self-acting. And he prepared a lamp which burned under water. At length his character for ingenuity procured him the situation of engine-wright to the colliery, with a salary of a hundred a year and the use of a pony. He was very fond of riding, and this was a great privilege to

him. From this time forward he was comparatively free from the necessity of manual labour. And the main end which he held in view in his improved circumstances was to give his son Robert a thoroughly good education. Like worthy Ned Cheeryble, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, worthy George Stephenson might have said,—‘Education is a fine thing :—*I* know it is a fine thing,—because I never had any myself.’ It was while engine-wright at Killingworth that Stephenson began to turn his attention to the locomotive steam-engine.

Railways had been known in England for many years. As early as the beginning of the seventeenth century rude beams of wood had been laid down, along which coal-wagons ran from the pit to the shipping-place. Iron came gradually into use ; and in 1789 a considerable improvement was made by placing the flange, or raised rim to keep the wagon in the track, upon the wheel, instead of, as formerly, on the rail itself. In 1800 Mr. Outram introduced stone supports for the rails ; hence such roads were called *Outram roads*, which was afterwards abbreviated into *tram-roads*. Various kinds of propelling power were proposed for use on railways. Some advocated sails ; and James Watt had the idea of a locomotive engine. Several ‘travelling engines,’ as they were termed, had been made by different engineers, but they had all proved practically useless. In 1804 Trevethick constructed a locomotive, which was placed on the Merthyr Tydvil Railway, in South Wales ; but it was abandoned after a few experiments. A great difficulty was anticipated from the wheels

of the locomotive turning round without *biting* the rails with adhesion sufficient to move the machine forward. To avoid this, Mr. Blenkinsop proposed a racked rail on one side, into which a toothed wheel should work; Mr. Chapman proposed that the locomotive should draw itself by a chain stretched along the railway, and passing round a barrel wheel in the engine; and Mr. Brunton, in 1813, patented a locomotive to go upon legs. It is needless to say that this difficulty, which drew forth so much needless ingenuity, has proved quite visionary. But in the midst of many plans for travelling engines, the practically useful locomotive still remained to be invented. In the words of Mr. Smiles—

There was still wanting the man who should accomplish for the locomotive what James Watt had done for the steam-engine, and combine in a complete form the separate plans of others, embodying with them such original inventions and adaptations of his own, as to entitle him to the merit of inventing the working locomotive, in the same manner as James Watt is regarded as the inventor of the working condensing engine. This was the great work on which George Stephenson now entered, probably without any adequate idea of the immense consequences of his labours to society and civilisation.

In fact, the travelling engines which had hitherto been constructed were ingenious curiosities—but mere toys after all. They were in practice useless. Stephenson had heard much of them, and had seen one or two; and in 1813 he proposed to the lessees of the colliery, among whom Lord Ravensworth was the principal partner, to construct a locomotive engine. Lord Ravensworth had heard much of

Stephenson's ingenious contrivances about the colliery, and after some consideration he agreed to advance the money necessary for the purpose. It was difficult to find skilled mechanics, and there were no tools fitted for an entirely new kind of work. Still the engine was built in the workshop at West Moor, under Stephenson's direction, the leading mechanic being the colliery blacksmith. It was placed on the Killingworth Railway on the 25th of July, 1814, and it succeeded in drawing thirty tons at four miles an hour. It continued at regular work, and many improvements were suggested in its daily operation. It was found that by conducting the steam-pipe into the chimney, the waste steam, instead of escaping with a hissing screech, which terrified all who came near, would pass comparatively without noise, and serve an important end in stimulating combustion. This simple arrangement doubled the power of the engine; and in 1815 Stephenson took out a patent for a locomotive engine which contained the germ of all that has since been effected. Vast improvements in details no doubt separate the clumsy and ugly travelling engine of 1815, that champed up the rails and progressed by a succession of jerks, from the compact and noiseless locomotive of 1857, with its fluent motion and whirlwind speed; but the great principle of both is the same. Mr. Smiles says—

Thus, in 1815, Mr. Stephenson by dint of patient and persevering labour,—by careful observation of the works of others, and never neglecting to avail himself of their suggestions,—had succeeded in manufacturing an engine which included the

following important improvements on all previous attempts in the same direction : viz., simple and direct communication between the cylinder and the wheels rolling on the rails ; joint adhesion of all the wheels, attained by the use of horizontal connecting rods ; and, finally, a beautiful method for exciting the combustion of the fuel by employing the waste steam, which had formerly been allowed uselessly to escape into the air.—(p. 93.)

It was about this time that Stephenson invented the *Geordy* safety-lamp, for use in mines. In principle it much resembles the Davy. But Stephenson had it in use months before Sir Humphry Davy's invention was completed ; and nothing could have been more unjust than the accusations brought by Sir Humphry's friends against Stephenson of having pirated the Davy lamp. At a public meeting of proprietors of mines, held at Newcastle in January, 1818, Stephenson was presented with a purse of a thousand sovereigns, in testimony of the sense entertained by the donors of the value of his safety-lamp.

But Stephenson's mission lay in the track of the railway and the locomotive, and we feel that anything else is an interruption in the great business of his life. His engines did their work daily at Killingworth very satisfactorily, but somehow they failed to attract much notice. In 1819 a coal railway from Stockton to Darlington was projected by Mr. Edward Pease, a wealthy Quaker. An Act of Parliament was obtained ; and while Mr. Pease was looking about for suitable agents to carry out his plans George Stephenson called on him, bearing a letter of introduction from the manager at Killingworth. Mr. Pease was pleased

with his visitor's appearance. 'There was,' he afterwards said, 'such an honest, sensible look about him, and he seemed so modest and unpretending.' He spoke in the strong Northumbrian dialect of his district, and described himself as 'only the engine-wright at Killingworth ; that's what he was.' Horse-power was to have been used on the new railway ; but Stephenson assured Mr. Pease that the engine which had worked for years at Killingworth was worth fifty horses, and entreated him to come and see it. Mr. Pease accordingly went, in the summer of 1822, accompanied by his friend, Mr. John Richardson. They found Stephenson's cottage ; the door was opened by his second wife, whom he had married in 1819. And in a few minutes Stephenson appeared in his working dress, just out of the pit. He speedily brought up his engine, and exhibited its paces, running it backwards and forwards with a train of loaded wagons. Mr. Pease was thoroughly satisfied ; and the result was that George Stephenson was appointed engineer to the Stockton and Darlington Railway, with a salary of £300 a year ; and in 1823 he removed with his family to Darlington. He laid out the entire line of railway himself. His assistant in the work, John Dixon, tells us that—

Mr. Stephenson, in top-boots and breeches, used to start early in the morning, taking with him in his capacious pocket a piece of raw bacon and a hunch of bread, with which, about mid-day, he would enter a cottage or farm-house in the line of his survey, and ask leave to have his bit of bacon fried. Generally he was enabled to obtain the addition of some eggs and a drink of milk,

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by the help of which, and a hearty appetite, he contrived to make a good dinner. The farming people along the line of the proposed railway soon got to know him, and they used to give him a hearty welcome when he appeared at their door, for he was always full of cheery, gay, and homely conversation; and when there were children about the house he had plenty of surplus fun for them, as well as for their seniors.—(p. 193.)

Hitherto rails had been made of cast-iron; but, although Stephenson was interested in a patent for these, he strongly urged the directors to use rails of malleable iron. The cost was more than double, and the directors arranged that at first only half the rails should be malleable. The important question of gauge was settled very simply. The ordinary gauge of the vehicles of the country was four feet eight and a half inches; and this was adopted as of course. Three locomotives were ordered from a factory at Newcastle in which Stephenson had invested his present of a thousand pounds. The railway works approached completion; and one day Stephenson, accompanied by John Dixon and his son Robert (who was about to proceed to Columbia, to superintend a large mining work), inspected a part of the line, and afterwards dined together at one of the inns at Stockton. After dinner Stephenson ventured on the unprecedented extravagance of ordering a bottle of wine, to drink success to the railway:—

‘Now, lads,’ said he to the two young men, ‘I will tell you that I think you will live to see the day, though I may not live so long, when railways will come to supersede almost all other methods of conveyance in this country;—when mail-coaches will go by railway, and railroads will become the Great Highway for

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the king and all his subjects. The time is coming when it will be cheaper for a working man to travel on a railway than to walk on foot. I know there are great and almost insurmountable difficulties that will have to be encountered : but what I have said will come to pass as sure as we live.'

The railway was opened on the 27th September, 1825. A great crowd had assembled to see the blowing up of the boasted travelling engine. A single engine drew a train of thirty-eight carriages, loaded with six hundred passengers and many tons of merchandise, at a rate varying from four to twelve miles an hour. The railway was completely successful. The traffic anticipated had been entirely in coal ; but, by way of a trial, an old stage-coach was bought, placed on a wooden frame, and named the 'Experiment.' It was drawn by one horse, at the rate of ten miles an hour : for it was not till the Liverpool and Manchester Railway had been opened that regular trains of passenger carriages were run, drawn by the locomotive. But the old 'Experiment' was daily overcrowded, and the railway became a favourite route for passengers.

But the question of railways and locomotives was soon to be set at rest for ever. The merchants of Liverpool and Manchester, who had long suffered much inconvenience from the insufficiency of the canal communication between these two great towns, had for years talked of a railway. The authorities of the Bridgewater Canal violently opposed the scheme ; but a company was formed in the year 1824. The prospectus issued was a careful and temperate document. The chief advantage it proposed was the conveyance

of goods in five or six hours, instead of six-and-thirty, as by the canal. All the shares were speedily taken up. Several deputations were sent to inspect Stephenson's engines at Killingworth, and a survey of the country through which the line would pass was proceeded with. This survey was violently opposed by the landowners, Lord Derby and Lord Sefton being especially antagonistic. On the Bridgewater property Mr. Stephenson, who had been engaged to survey the line, was threatened with a ducking; and much of the survey had to be made either by force or by stealth. All possible means were employed to stir up popular prejudice against the railway. Pamphlets and newspapers were liberally used. Terrible stories were circulated as to the results which would follow the passage of the locomotives :—

It was declared that the formation of the railway would prevent cows grazing and hens laying. The poisoned air from the locomotives would kill birds as they flew over them, and render the preservation of pheasants and foxes no longer possible. Householders adjoining the projected line were told that their houses would be burnt up by the fire thrown by the engine-chimneys, while the air around would be polluted by clouds of smoke. There would no longer be any use for horses, and if railways extended the species would become extinguished, and oats and hay unsaleable commodities. Travelling by road would be rendered highly dangerous, and country inns would be ruined. Boilers would burst and blow passengers to atoms. But then there was always this consolation to wind up with—that the weight of the locomotive would completely prevent it moving, and that railways, even if made, could *never* be worked by steam-power.—(pp. 219, 220.)

And even Mr. Nicholas Wood, a warm supporter

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of the locomotive, in 1825 protested as follows against the extravagant ideas of Stephenson :—

It is far from my wish to promulgate to the world that the ridiculous expectations, or rather professions, of the enthusiast speculator will be realised, and that we shall see engines travelling at the rate of twelve, sixteen, eighteen miles an hour. Nothing could do more harm toward their general adoption and improvement than the promulgation of such nonsense.

Indeed, it is evident that at this period even the friends of Mr. Stephenson were of opinion that his statements as to the powers of the locomotive were likely to have a damaging effect upon the cause of railways. Mr. William Brougham, who conducted the case of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway before the Parliamentary Committee, told Stephenson frankly that ‘if he did not moderate his views, and bring his engine within a *reasonable* speed, he would inevitably damn the whole thing, and be himself regarded as a maniac fit for Bedlam.’

The case came before Parliament in due course, and Stephenson was the principal witness called to prove the practicability of the railway. He appeared in the witness-box on the 25th April, 1825; and he was subjected to an amount of badgering and bullying on the part of the opposing counsel which at the present day seems almost incredible. The late Baron Alderson, who was the chief of these, ought never to have looked at a railway till the end of his life without a blush. Stephenson found it very difficult to explain to the Committee matters which in his own mind were very clear, and ‘in his strong Northumbrian accent he

struggled for utterance in the face of the sneers, interruptions, and ridicule of the opponents of the measure ; and even of the Committee, some of whom shook their heads and whispered doubts of his sanity when he energetically avowed that he could make the locomotive go at twelve miles an hour.' A member of Committee, eager to put a question, said with dignity, ' Suppose, now, one of these engines to be going along a railroad at nine or ten miles an hour, and that a cow were to stray upon the line and get in the way of the engine ; would not that, think you, be a very awkward circumstance ? ' ' Yes,' replied Stephenson, with a twinkle in his eye, ' very awkward, indeed, *for the cow!*' The clever member shut up, and was seen no more. A great point was made of the impracticability of carrying the Railway over Chat Moss. Mr. Francis Giles, an engineer, declared that ' no man in his senses would go through Chat Moss if he wanted to make a railway from Liverpool to Manchester.' But scandalous as were the assaults made on Stephenson in cross-examination, they were nothing compared to those made in the flippant and silly speeches in which Messrs. Harrison and Alderson summed up the case against the Bill. No severer punishment could possibly be inflicted at the present time upon the authors of these speeches than simply to read them, without note or comment, to any company of educated Englishmen. The actual fact is the best reply to Mr. Harrison's declaration, ' I will show that a locomotive engine cannot go six miles an hour, and that for all practical purposes I can keep up with him by the canal. Any

gale of wind that would affect the traffic on the Mersey would render it *impossible* to set off a locomotive engine.' And the fame and fortune amid which George Stephenson died may be set off against Mr. Alderson's declaration,—'My learned friends wished me to put in the plan; but I would rather have *the exhibition of Mr. Stephenson in that box. I say he never had a plan—I believe he never had one—I do not believe he is capable of making one.*'

The Bill was thrown out by a majority of one, and an application in the following session proved successful. The Bill passed, notwithstanding a speech from Sir Isaac Coffin against it. 'What,' exclaimed the intelligent member—

What is to be done with those who may still wish to travel in their own or hired carriages, after the fashion of their forefathers? What is to become of coachmakers and harnessmakers, coachmasters and coachmen, innkeepers, horse-breeders, and horse-dealers? Iron will be raised in price a hundred per cent.; or, more probably, exhausted altogether. It will be the greatest nuisance, the most complete disturbance of quiet and comfort in all parts of the kingdom that the ingenuity of man could invent.

The Act cost the Company £27,000; and in 1826 Stephenson was appointed principal engineer, with a salary of £1,000 a year.

No sooner was he appointed than he made arrangements to commence the works. He began with Chat Moss in June, 1826. The task of making a railway through this great morass appeared almost an impossible one. The line ran through it for four miles. Thousands and thousands of cubic yards of earth were

thrown into the moss to make an embankment for the railway, but the enormous mass of material disappeared as it was cast in. The work went on for weeks without apparent progress. The directors feared the plan must be abandoned ; but Stephenson held by his great rule—to *persevere*. With great ingenuity, he devised means for making the railway *float* upon the bog ; and at last, at an expense of £28,000, the four miles were constructed, and they have proved the best part of the line. Stephenson had not, as modern railway engineers have, all the organisation needful for making a railway ready to his hand ; in those days contractors, navvies, barrows, temporary rails were not. He sent for his son Robert from America, and henceforward the distinguished father was always aided and advised by the not less eminent son. Reports were industriously spread that the railway works could not go on ; hundreds of men and horses had sunk in Chat Moss ; the bridges were falling and the embankments crumbling down. The railway works were regarded as being on a vast scale then, though they would not be regarded as very remarkable now. A tunnel under part of Liverpool, and a deep cutting through solid rock near that town, were among the most important. The line at length approached completion.

It still remained to be decided what propelling power should be employed upon the new railway. The directors consulted all the most eminent engineers of the day, who, without exception, reported against the locomotive. It was thought that horse power would prove insufficient, and stationary engines were recommended

to be placed at intervals along the line, and to draw the trains by ropes. Stephenson stood in a minority of one, and the Telfords, Rennies, and Rastricks of the day put aside with contempt the opinions of the Killingworth engine-wright. At length, by pure importunity, Stephenson prevailed on the directors, before incurring the great expense of stationary engines, to give the locomotive a trial. They accordingly determined to offer a prize of £500 for the best engine which should on a certain day be produced on the railway. It was stipulated that the engine should produce no smoke, and should attain a speed of ten miles an hour. Stephenson instantly set to the construction of his trial engine, the famous 'Rocket.' He introduced into it all recent improvements, and especially the tubular boiler. In every essential particular the Rocket is the type of the locomotive of 1857, though it was a small, light, and rather awkward-looking machine. The trial took place at Rainhill on the 6th of October, 1829. Four engines were entered for competition, but the Rocket alone fulfilled the conditions which had been laid down.

The engine was taken to the extremity of the stage, the fire-box was filled with coke, the fire lighted, and the steam raised until it lifted the safety-valve, loaded to a pressure of fifty pounds to the square inch. This proceeding occupied fifty-seven minutes. The engine then started on its journey, dragging after it about thirteen tons weight in wagons, and made the first ten trips backwards and forwards along the two miles of road, running the thirty-five miles, including stoppages, in an hour and forty-eight minutes. The second ten trips were in like manner performed in two hours and three minutes. The maximum velocity

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attained by the Rocket during the trial trip was twenty-nine miles an hour, or about three times the speed that one of the judges of the competition had declared to be the limit of possibility. The average speed at which the whole of the journeys were performed was fifteen miles an hour, or five miles beyond the rate specified in the conditions published by the company. The entire performance excited the greatest astonishment among the assembled spectators; the directors felt confident that the enterprise was now on the eve of success; and George Stephenson rejoiced to think that, in spite of all false prophets and fickle counsellors, his locomotive system was now safe. When the Rocket, having performed all the conditions of the contest, arrived at the platform at the close of its day's successful run, Mr. Isaac Cropper, one of the directors favourable to the fixed engine system, lifted up his hands, and exclaimed, 'Now is George Stephenson at last delivered.'

The prize of £500 was awarded to Stephenson's engine. It had done what no travelling engine had ever done before. It had decided for ever the question of stationary or locomotive engines. One would have thought that a thing of such historical interest would have been carefully preserved by the authorities of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. But they were practical men, and free from sentimentalism. More powerful engines came into use, and the poor Rocket met the fate of many a high-mettled racer. It was sold to a coal-work in 1837, and gradually it became unequal even to hauling the wagons. At last it was purchased by Mr. Stephenson, and it is now preserved in the works at Newcastle. The little factory started by George Stephenson about 1823 has grown into a gigantic establishment, which for years supplied locomotives to all the world. But there is nothing about

it that possesses half the interest of the old engine which, in 1829, confuted all the scientific men of Britain, and ushered in a revolution incomparably more important than any change in a royal house.

A single line of rails was completed between Liverpool and Manchester on the 1st of January, 1830. The works were retarded by a very rainy season ; but the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was publicly opened on the 15th September, 1830. Eight locomotive engines had by this time been constructed at Stephenson's factory, and placed upon the line. The completion of the railway was justly regarded as a great national event ; and the Duke of Wellington, then Prime Minister ; Mr. Peel, Home Secretary ; Mr. Huskisson, member for Liverpool, and an earnest supporter of the railway from its first projection ; with a host of distinguished persons, were present on the occasion. The 'Northumbrian' engine led the procession ; and other engines followed with trains, which conveyed six hundred persons. The trains started from Liverpool, and pursued their way towards Manchester amid the cheers of many thousands of spectators. At Parkside, seventeen miles from Liverpool, the engines stopped to take in water. The Northumbrian engine, with the carriage containing the Duke of Wellington, was drawn up on one line, that the other trains might pass in review before him on the other. Mr. Huskisson, who had alighted from his carriage, was standing on the opposite line of rails, when the Duke recognised him, and held out his hand. The Rocket was now seen rapidly approaching ; and there

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was a cry from the by-standers of 'Get in, get in!' Mr. Huskisson became confused, and remained in the track of the approaching engine. He was struck down, and one of his legs was crushed by the wheel. His words on being raised were, 'I have met my death;' and he died that evening. A gloom was cast upon the day by this deplorable accident. But the railway had been opened, and the triumph of the locomotive was complete. A great passenger traffic immediately sprang up. The coaches previously running had conveyed from four to five hundred persons daily, and the promoters of the railway had calculated on obtaining about half that number; but the railway was scarcely opened before the passengers averaged twelve hundred a day. The usual speed of the passenger trains was twenty-five miles an hour. It excited great wonder in the mind of two Edinburgh engineers sent to report on the railway that even at this unprecedented speed they 'could observe the passengers, among whom were a good many ladies, talking to gentlemen with the utmost *sang froid*.' The clear profit of the company amounted to £80,000 per annum. The land along the line, which was to have been utterly ruined, rose greatly in value; and when the company needed more of it they had to pay at a higher rate than formerly, on the ground that the proximity of the railway had improved it so much. Every day's experience suggested alterations upon the locomotives, and each new engine placed upon the line was an improvement upon those which had gone before it.

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Now that it had been proved that railways could be made, that locomotives could draw trains, and that the result of the whole might be a good return to the shareholders, it was merely a question of time how far the railway system should be extended. It might have been well had the Government planned a national scheme of railways, instead of leaving them to be made by joint-stock associations of private individuals. As it was, lines were speedily mapped out between the great cities of the kingdom, and railway engineers sprang up in abundance. In conjunction with his son Robert, George Stephenson was appointed engineer of most of the great lines projected. Among these were the Manchester and Leeds, the Grand Junction, and the London and Birmingham. The chief labour of laying out and executing the last-named line fell to the share of Robert Stephenson; and how he carried on the vast work is well known to all readers of Sir Francis Head's lively *Stokers and Pokers*.

The battle of the railway and locomotive was fought in the Liverpool and Manchester case; and, except where some extraordinary natural difficulty had to be overcome, as in the case of the Menai Bridge, the history of subsequent roads is a commonplace affair. Stephenson soon found that the world had come over to his way of thinking; and not many years passed before the opponents, not the advocates, of railways came to be regarded as the fit inhabitants of 'Bedlam.' Colonel Sibthorp, indeed, to the last, was staunch against 'those infernal railroads;' declaring that 'he would rather meet a highwayman or see a

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burglar on his premises than an engineer ; he should be much more safe ; and of the two classes he regarded the former as the more respectable.'

In 1840 Stephenson settled at Tapton Hall, near Chesterfield, and gradually withdrew from active employment in constructing railways. His disposition was too active for idleness, and he entered on several mining speculations, with various success. It is quite consistent with our experience of the way of the world, when Mr. Smiles assures us that in Stephenson's latter years some of the brisk young engineers of the day regarded him as a man of antiquated notions in railway matters, and considerably behind the age. He did not approve the design of the atmospheric railway ; he opposed railways on 'the undulating principle,' with considerable ups and downs ; he maintained the narrow gauge against the broad ; and he had no fancy for higher rates of speed than forty miles an hour. It is worthy of notice that a little further experience has proved that in all these respects Stephenson's views were sound and just. Many a ruined shareholder would have cause for thankfulness if all engineers had, like Stephenson, eschewed dashing and brilliant works executed without regard to their cost, and persisted in regarding a line of railway as a commercial speculation which must be made 'to pay.'

The period of the 'railway mania' of 1845-6 is too near our own time to need much remark. Stephenson held completely apart from all the new lines which were so recklessly projected, and in such numbers.

He was frequently offered large sums merely to allow his name to appear in a prospectus ; but he resolutely refused.

The 'engine-wright at Killingworth' was now a rich man and a famous man, with a statue at Liverpool, and courted by statesmen and peers ; but success had no power to spoil his simple, manly, unaffected nature. In his retirement at Tapton, in his last days, he was distinguished by the same fondness for animals of all kinds as when he was a herd-boy sixty years before. He knew every bird's nest on his grounds, and there was not one which missed a daily visit. Many were the acts of unostentatious benevolence by which he relieved honest want, or aided struggling merit. On his last public appearance, at the Leeds Mechanics' Institute, in December, 1847, he told the assembled crowd that 'he stood before them as a humble mechanic. He had risen from a lower standing than the meanest person there, and all that he had been enabled to accomplish in the course of his life had been done through perseverance. He said this for the purpose of encouraging youthful mechanics to do as he had done—to persevere.' He became an enthusiast in horticulture, and exhibited all his old ingenuity in devising means for bringing his fruits and flowers to greater perfection. The Duke of Devonshire's pines were better than his, and Stephenson would be beaten by no man, even in growing pines. He spent much time, in the summer of 1848, in the noxious atmosphere of his forcing houses, which his health, enfeebled by an

attack of pleurisy, could not resist. An intermitting fever came on, and, after an illness of a few days' duration, he died on the 12th of August, 1848, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

He had been greatly beloved by his work-people, and a large body of them followed him to the grave. The inhabitants of Chesterfield evinced their respect for him by closing their shops, suspending business, and joining in the funeral procession. No public honours or rewards ever came in his way. He was indeed repeatedly pressed to accept the title of knight, and on one occasion the Government offered him a piece of patronage: this was the appointment to the office of a letter-carrier, with fourteen shillings a week and sixteen miles a day. This means of extending his influence Mr. Stephenson refused. We have not space to attempt any delineation of his character; and it is needless. His character is drawn in those strong and manly lines which no one can mistake. Everything about him was genuine: his mechanical genius, his indomitable resolution, his intense honesty, his kindness of heart, his industry, his frugality, his generosity, his sound good sense, his unaffected modesty. He was an honour, as well as a great benefactor, to his country and to mankind. We do not know that there ever lived an individual to whom each separate inhabitant of Great Britain owes so much of real tangible advantage. His life is a fine lesson to every one. Honesty is the best policy, after all. And we do not know but that the working man may apply the lines of

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Robert Nicoll to George Stephenson, the Railway Engineer, with at least as much propriety as to the erratic genius of whom they were written :—

Before the proudest of the earth,
We stand, with an uplifted brow :
Like us, *Thou* wast a toiling man,—
And we are noble, now !

VIII.

OULITA THE SERF.*

THIS volume has no preface, and no notes save two or three of a line's length each. Its title-page bears nothing beyond the words, *Oulita the Serf; a Tragedy*. But the advertisements which foretold its publication added a fact which made us open the book with a very different feeling from that with which we should have taken up an ordinary anonymous play,—a fact which at once excited high expectations,—and which, we doubt not, has already introduced *Oulita* to a wide circle of readers, each prepared to gauge its merits by a very severe test and a very high standard. The forthcoming volume was announced as *Oulita the Serf; a Tragedy: by the Author of 'Friends in Council.'*

The disguise of the author of that work is becoming ragged. We have found, in more than one library, where a special glory of binding was bestowed upon the book and its charming sequel, that, though the title-page bore no name, the volumes were marked

* *Oulita the Serf*. A Tragedy. London: 1858.

with a name which is well and honourably known. And indeed there are few books which are so calculated as *Friends in Council* to make the reader wish to know who is the author whom he has learned to revere and love : and surely the language has none which, in its gentle playfulness, its intense honesty, its comprehensive sympathy, its earnestness so tempered with the desire to do justice to all, affords its writer less reason for seeking any disguise. Yet it is not for us to add the author's name to a title-page which the author has chosen to send nameless into the world : though we may be permitted to say that, whoever may be the writer of the works to which we have been alluding, though we never exchanged words with him, and never saw him, still, in common with an increasing host of readers, we cannot think of him as other than a kind and sympathetic friend.

Accordingly, we expected a great deal from this new work. We were not entirely taken by surprise, indeed, when we saw it announced : for Ellesmere, in *Friends in Council*, makes several quotations from the works of 'a certain obscure dramatist,' which are likely to set the thoughtful reader inquiring. And whoever shall carefully collate the advertisements of the late Mr. Pickering's publications will discover that the author of *Oulita* published a good many years ago an historical drama entitled *King Henry the Second*, and a tragedy entitled *Catherine Douglas*, whose heroine is the strong-hearted Scottish maiden who thrust her arm into the staple of a door from which the bolt had been removed, in the desperate hope of thus retarding for a moment

the entrance of the conspirators who murdered James the First. But these plays are comparatively unknown; and probably very many readers who have been delighted by that graceful, unaffected prose, were quite unaware that its writer was endowed with the faculty of verse. We could not fail, indeed, to discern in his prose works the wide, genial sympathy, the deep thoughtfulness, the delicate sensitiveness, of the true poet. And his talent, we could also discover from these, is essentially dramatic. The characters in *Friends in Council* have each their marked individuality; while yet that individuality is maintained and brought out, not by coarse caricature, but by those delicate and natural touches which make us feel that we are conversing with real human beings, and not with mere names in a book. It is an extremely easy thing to make us recognise a character when he reappears upon the stage, by making him perpetually repeat some silly and vulgar phrase. Smith is the man who never enters without roaring 'It's all serene : ' Jones is the individual who always says 'Not to put too fine a point upon it.' Nor is it difficult for an author to *tell us* that his hero is a great man, a philanthropist, a thinker, an actor : it is quite another matter to make him speak and act so that we shall find *that* out for ourselves. Many characters in modern works need to be labelled ;—like the sign-painter's lion, which no one would have guessed was a lion but for the words *This is a lion* written beneath it.

Let us say at once that this tragedy has surpassed our expectation. It is a noble and beautiful work.

It is strongly marked with the same characteristics which distinguish its author's former writings. Its power and excellence are mainly in thoughtfulness, pathos, humour. There is a certain subtlety of thought,—a capacity gradually to surround the reader with an entire world and a complete life : we feel how heartily the writer has thrown himself into the state of things he describes, half believing the tale he tells, and using gently and tenderly the characters he draws. We have a most interesting story : we see before us beings of actual flesh and blood. We do not know whether the gentle, yet resolute Oulita,—the Princess Marie, that spoiled child of fortune, now all wild ferocity, and now all soft relenting,—the Count von Straubenheim, that creature of passion so deep, yet so slow, so calm upon the surface, yet so impetuous in its under-currents,—ever lived save in the fancy of the poet : but to us they are a reality,—far more a reality than half the men who have lived and died in fact, but who live on the page of history the mere bloodless life of a word and an abstraction. We find in this tragedy the sharp knowledge of life and human nature for which we were prepared : a certain tinge of sadness and resignation which did not surprise us : a kindly yet sorrowful feeling towards the very worst, which we are persuaded comes with the longer and fuller experience of the strange mixture of the loveable and the hateful which is woven into the constitution of the race. Here and there we find the calm, self-possessed order of thought with which we have elsewhere grown familiar gradually rise into eloquent energy and vigour of expression

which startles. But the hero is not one who raves and stamps. And indeed the fastidious taste of the writer, shrinking instinctively from the least trace of coarseness or extravagance, has perhaps resulted in a little want of the terrible passion of tragedy: for we can well believe that many an expression, and many a sentiment, which, heard just for once from eloquent lips, would thrill even the most refined, would be struck out by the remorseless pen, or at least toned down, when calmly, critically, and repeatedly read over by such an author as ours, when the fever of creative inspiration was past. We remark, as a characteristic of the plot, and a circumstance vitally affecting the order of its interest, that the catastrophe is involved in the characters of the actors. It is not by the arbitrary appointment of the author that things run in the course they do. There is something of the old Greek sense of the inevitable. We feel from the beginning that the end is fixed as fate. Like Frankenstein, the poet has bodied out beings whom he has not at his command: and not without essentially changing their natures could he materially modify what they say and do, or materially alter the path along which they advance to the precipice in the distance. Given such beings, placed in Russian life and under Russian government: and not without a jarring sacrifice of truthfulness could the story advance or end otherwise than as it does.

The language of the tragedy is such as might have been expected from its author. There is not a phrase, not a word from first to last, to which the most fasti-

dious taste could take exception. So much might be anticipated by readers familiar with the author's prose style : but we felt something of curiosity as to how it might adapt itself to the altered conditions of verse. Even those readers who were not aware that the author of *Friends in Council* had ever before published poetry might well judge that surely these lines, so easy, so flowing, so little laboured, so varied in their rhythm, so uncramped by metrical requirements, are not the production of an unpractised hand. Parts of the dialogue are in prose ; the larger portion is in blank verse ; and some graceful lyrics occur here and there. A peculiarity of the author's blank verse is that the lines frequently end in three short syllables. Our readers are of course aware that both in rhymed and blank verse double endings of lines are very common : in dramatic blank verse, indeed, we find line after line exhibiting this formation : * but we are not aware that any author has employed the triple ending to the same degree, or indeed has employed it at all except on very rare occasions. In the first page we find it said that the end of government should be, not to govern overmuch, but

To make men do with the least show of *governing*.

Other examples are,

In foreign Courts 'tis everything, this *precedence*.
From trappings overgreat for poor *humanity*.

* To be, or not to be, that is the *question* :
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to *suffer*
The slings and arrows of outrageous *fortune*,
Or to take arms against a sea of *troubles*, &c.

E'en to yourself must be unknown your *benefits*.
Alone and undisturbed, upon her *loveliness*.

And there is one instance of an ending in four short syllables :—

In evidence against us, marking *preparation*.

We have been interested by finding here and there throughout the tragedy several thoughts upon matters more or less important, with which we had become acquainted in the writer's former works. It is plain that the writer thinks the discomfort arising from fashions of dress a not insignificant item in the tale of human suffering : he would agree with Teufelsdröckh himself as to the undeserved neglect in which men have held the 'philosophy of clothes.' We find the men servants at a Boyard Prince's chateau busily engaged in trying on their new liveries, which have been prepared for a grand occasion. The Prince enters, and finds but little progress made. He rates his domestics for their slowness ; whereupon the 'Small Wise Man,' a dwarf attached to his establishment, thus excuses his fellows :—

Oh ! the happy peasants are so uncomfortable, my little father, in their happy new clothes, that they put off the squeezing themselves into them to the last moment. It's a nice thing a new shoe, now ; and not so very unlike a marriage, my little mother.

The author had thought upon this subject before :—

My own private opinion is, that the discomfort caused by injudicious dress, worn entirely in deference to the most foolish of mankind, would outweigh many an evil that sounds very big.

Tested by these perfect returns, which I imagine might be made by the angelic world, if they regard human affairs, perhaps our every-day shaving, severe shirt-collars, and other ridiculous garments, are equivalent to a great European war once in seven years ; and we should find that women's stays did as much harm, *i. e.* caused as much suffering, as an occasional pestilence,—say, for instance, the cholera.*

In graver mood, we find something of the philosophy of worldly progress and quietude, in words which suggest (how truly) that the man who would *get on* in life had better not think to carve out a way for himself, but should rather keep to the track which many other feet have beaten into smoothness and firmness. The hero of the tragedy says,—

To preserve one's quietude,
It needs that one should travel in the ruts
That form the ordinary road, for else
The wheels stick fast.

The analogy is so apt and true that it had previously suggested itself:—

Get, if you can, into one or other of the main grooves of human affairs. It is all the difference of going by railway, and walking over a ploughed field, whether you adopt common courses, or set one up for yourself. You will see very inferior persons highly placed in the army, in the church, in office, at the bar. They have somehow got upon the line, and have moved on well with very little original motive power of their own.†

We find that the author, very naturally, makes his hero express tastes which he himself feels strongly.

* *Companions of my Solitude.* Chap. III. And see the same subject discussed in the essay on *Conformity*, in Chap. II. of *Friends in Council*.

† *Ibid.* Chap. IV.

One of these tastes, which appears repeatedly in his former writings, is for woodland scenery. 'There is scarcely anything in nature,' he says, 'to be compared with a pine-wood.' Once, in approaching a certain continental city, the author passed through what the guide-books described as a most insipid country. But the guide-books did not know what were his personal likings. Leaving his carriage at the little post-house, he walked on, promising to be in the way when it should overtake him :—

The road led through a wood, chiefly of pines, varied, however, occasionally by other trees. Into this wood I strayed. There was that almost indescribably soothing noise (the Romans would have used the word *susurrus*), the aggregate of many gentle movements of gentle creatures. The birds hopped but a few paces off as I approached them : the brilliant butterflies wavered hither and thither before me : there was a soft breeze that day, and the tops of the tall trees swayed to and fro politely to each other. I found many delightful resting places. It was not all dense wood ; but here and there were glades (such open spots I mean as would be cut through by the sword for an army to pass) ; and here and there stood a clump of trees of different heights and foliage, as beautifully arranged as if some triumph of the art of landscape had been intended, though it was only Nature's way of healing up the gaps in the forest. For her healing is a new beauty.*

Thus speaks the author in his own person : and his hero, passing alone through a wood, speaks as follows :—

I ever loved a wood ; and here I've mused,
Pressing with lightest footfall the crisp leaves,
In boyhood's days, when life seemed infinite,

* *Companions of my Solitude.* Chap. VI.

And every fitful sound a song of joy.
Great is the sea, but tedious ; rich the sun,
But one gets tired of him, too ; joyous the wind,
But boisterous and intrusive ;—while the wood
Divides the sun, and air, and sky ; and, like
A perfect woman, naught too much revealed,
Nor aught too much concealing.

We shall be content to quote one other instance of parallelism, in the notice given to a matter which every one who lives in a wooded district must often have remarked in his woodland wanderings. The hero of the tragedy is asked to tell of what he has been thinking as he has been traversing the wood which he enjoys so much : here is his reply :—

Mere melancholy thoughts, fit for a servitor :
How this tree here hemmed in its puny neighbour,
Drinking the air and light from it ; how that,
The vagrant branches into shapes grotesque
Constrained, insisted yet on being beautiful,
And like a homely girl with one charm only,
Took care to make that charm discernible.

In saying this the hero of the play is repeating what had before been said by its author. And it appears to us an indication of the life-like reality with which the author depicted to himself the man whom he drew as he paced along, looking at the grey stems and the long grass below, and the green leaves and blue glimpses of sky above :—

Yes, Ellesmere, my love for woods is unabated. There is so much largeness, life, and variety in them. Even the way in which the trees interfere with one another, the growth which is hindered, as well as that which is furthered, appears to me most suggestive of human life ; and I see around me things that remind me of governments, churches, sects, and colonies.

We should not be doing justice to *Oulita* if we failed to remark, as something singular in these days, that it is a purely and perfectly original work. Its author has constructed his own plot, and imagined his own characters. It is very well for writers who have no higher aim than to supply the immediate exigencies of the stage to quarry in the abundant mine of French invention, and to copy, borrow, or *adapt*, as the phrase now runs. But we should have been greatly surprised had the author of *Friends in Council* resorted to that cheap method of producing a dramatic work. It cannot be denied that several dramatic writers of the day have shown considerable tact in toning French characters and modifying French plots, till they should hit the English taste, and not sound absurdly upon English ground. But to do *that* is a *knack*, a sort of intellectual sleight of hand: it argues no invention, no dramatic genius: it comes rather of much practical acquaintance with the tricks and effects of the theatre. The author of this play has essayed a higher flight. He has resolved to give the English stage a really original work: and holding firmly, as we know from his former writings, that some kind of amusement is a pure necessary of life, and that there is in human nature an instinctive leaning to the dramatic as a source of amusement, he has sought to show, by example, that without becoming namby-pamby,—without letting the well-intentioned degenerate into the twaddling,—and without making the great schoolboys of mankind scent the birch-rod and the imposition under the disguise of cricket-bats and strawberry tarts,—it is possible to make a play such as that

in amusing it shall also instruct, refine, and elevate. It is not by coarsely tacking on a moral to a tragedy that you will enforce any moral teaching. You must so wrap up the improving and instructive element in the interesting and attractive that the mass of readers or listeners shall never know when they have overstepped the usually well-marked limit that parts work and play. And we think that the author of *Oulita* has succeeded in this. A refreshing and elevating influence sinks into the mind, like a shower upon a newly-mown lawn, as we read his pages. You feel, but cannot define it. But many worthy people would cram improvement, a thick porridge, down their humbler neighbours' throats, —like Mrs. Squeers's treacle and sulphur.

As the reader would expect from the title of the book, the scene of the tragedy is in Russia. Its time is the beginning of the present century. And the author has, in virtue of his hearty sympathy with humanity under all conditions, thrown himself completely into Russian life, and brought his readers into an entire world of scenes, things, and men and women. Yet, though the scene be in Russia, and though we know from his other works how much the author hates slavery, we find proof of the calm balance of his mind in the fashion in which he represents serfdom. His honesty will not permit him to coarsely daub his picture for the sake of popular effect, or to represent the 'peculiar institution' as more glaringly bad than he has ground for believing it practically is, in order to render it more abhorrent to our feeling. Nor do we find any violent exhibition of despotic sway. We do not believe

that the author would sympathise in the least with the childish cry for Imperialism which lately arose in this country. We trust the nation has passed through that crisis, like a child through the cow-pox, and that we are fairly done with it. Still, in the play, the Emperor of Russia is represented in a very favourable light, as kind-hearted, accessible, willing to listen to reason, and even to accusation of himself; and though autocratic, yet enchained by an overmastering and tyrannic sense of what is right and just, which drags him against his dearest wishes. We have said that there is no putting of serfdom in its coarser and more repellent features. *Oulita the Serf* is the pride and pet of the old Prince to whom she belongs, and the chosen companion and friend of the Princess his daughter. No cruelties are described as actually inflicted upon any serf in the course of the action of the drama:—we can imagine that the sensitive nature of the author would shrink from any such description: yet we feel keenly the hard iron links which are present beneath the soft velvet surface. We never entirely forget the difference that parts the serf, however indulged, from the freeman, however degraded. The gentle confidante is liable to be handed over, at the capricious word of her spoiled-child mistress, to the executioner's lash. And the naturally noble heart of the Princess is well-nigh ruined by the long possession of unlimited power. We are not sure but that to the thoughtful reader serfdom is made as incurably bad in this volume as it could have been in the picture of a Legree. The way to make us feel that a thing is hopelessly bad is to show us that it is bad at its very

best. If it be a sad thing to be in bondage to a mild, silly old gentleman who would not hurt a fly, and to a warm-hearted girl who kisses more than she scolds,—what must it be when the whip is in the hand of a coarse, brutal, swearing, drunken Yankee !

The first scene of the tragedy shows us Baron Grübner, the Russian Minister of Police, seated at his desk in his bureau at St. Petersburg. He is inveighing against the Count Von Straubenheim, who is on terms of intimate friendship with the Emperor, and who has been instilling into the autocrat's mind certain political doctrines of much too advanced a character for Grübner's taste. Grübner is the type of the old Continental politician : the Count belongs to the school of progress ; and Grübner, fearing lest the Count's influence with the Emperor should bring to an end the reign of police administration, has organised a system of *espionage*, in the hope of detecting the Count in some proceeding which may lead to his downfall. We feel, at once, that the ground is mined beneath our feet, and that we are in a region over which broods the unseen but all-seeing presence of a secret police. We never escape the feeling on to the end of the play. A spy enters and informs Grübner that the Emperor again receives the obnoxious Count that evening. The vulgar spy has his information from a certain baroness, a spy of a higher class. The spy leaves, and Grübner thus goes on :—

Far into

The distant future this wise man looked forward,
And saw a time, he told the Emperor,
When half the world would not employ itself

In worrying the other half. Great sage!
 He meant that for a sneer at the Police;
 And when good honest men would not sit down
 At meat with titled spies—that means the Baroness;
 Or with the men who pay them—that means me.

Another spy enters, one Ermolaï, whom Grübner has got into the Count's employ as his Secretary, to maintain a constant watch over his private doings. Ermolaï complains that his post is a sinecure. There is nothing to report. The Count spends all his time in reading. He reads theology. *That*, Grübner thinks, is an important point. If the Count succeeds in indoctrinating the Emperor with his theories down goes Grübner, and with him (of course he is a most disinterested man) Russia. The Count, Grübner says, is to be married: so the Emperor and he have resolved: then he is to go as ambassador to England, where he will probably make some mistake that will ruin him, or at least where he will be beyond the Emperor's reach. Grübner dismisses Ermolaï, ordering him to maintain a most minute watch, and chuckles at his own skill in getting the Count to take a police tool for his secretary.

The second scene carries us to the Count von Straubenheim's library. He is among his favourite books. He lays down his volume, and muses as follows:—

One reads, and reads, and reads: one seldom gets
 Right into the heart of things—there's so much floss
 And fluff; and few can tell what they do know.
 Long histories: weary biographies:
 They only teach us what I partly guessed
 Before—that men were most times miserable,

And simple thoroughly, wasting their souls
In plaguing other men, and seldom living
What I call life—an ugly dream it is ;
And yet, with all my faculty for sarcasm,
I must confess that men, the worst of men,
This scoundrel horde of conquerors, for instance,
Have something very loveable about them.
The deeper that one goes, the more one's pity
Falls like a gentle snow upon the plain
Flooded with blood, and strewed with cruel carnage,
Leaving the outlines beautiful, and just
Concealing what 't were better never had
Been done—concealing only, not erasing :
'Tis a mixed brood.

We speedily find that the recluse student is not so simple after all. He knows all about Ermolaï being a spy upon him. He sends for Ermolaï : says he is about to marry the beautiful daughter of Prince Lanskof. Ermolaï discourages the marriage, and says,

I've heard a saying
Of some sagacious world-versed man,—that marriage
Must be pronounced a thing so hazardous,
The odds so much against one, that it were
As if a man should dip his hand within
A bag of snakes, where one eel lies concealed ;
And mostly he draws back his injured hand
Without the innocent eel.

The Count is anxious to repudiate any notion save of a prosaic marriage of convenience ; but at the same time he beautifully depicts what he says he never had felt :—

I have a distant notion of what love
Might be. I know the dreams about the thing.

That there is one whose every look and word
Is fascination, graceful as the clouds,
Bright as the morn, and tender as the eve,—
Whose lightest gesture, as she moves across
The room, seems like a well-known melody,—
And whom you need not talk to much, for that's
The touchstone,—to whom you've nothing to explain,
Because she always thinks too well of you.

In answer to the Count's question where he shall find such a paragon, the secretary mentions the name of the singing girl at Moscow, Oulita. The Count remembers her well. But he speedily passes to talk of the embassy to England; and then bids Ermolai prepare a sumptuous retinue for his visit to the chateau of Prince Lanskof, the father of his intended bride. Ermolai goes: and then we learn from a speech of the Count's that he is quite aware that the marriage and embassy are a design of Grübner's to compass his ruin. But he will fight Grübner with his own weapons. He will pluck from his bosom the remembrance of Oulita, wed the Princess, come back with credit from his embassy, and do good to his country. If he shall succeed, well. And if not, life is already as dull as it well can be.

We next find ourselves in the hall of Prince Lanskof's chateau. The servants are trying on their new liveries; the dancing girls are practising their steps. The 'Small Wise Man,' a dwarf belonging to the Prince, a jester of more than usual jest, and deeper than ordinary wisdom, makes his first appearance. All is bustle: the Count is to arrive in three hours. Oulita appears along with the Princess, the latter pro-

missing her that she shall not have to join in the dances. The Prince drills his domestics in a manner that reminds us of Mr. Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer*. He is a fussy, silly old gentleman, proud of his daughter, and picturing the grand figure she is to make at the English Court as the Russian ambassadress.

Meanwhile Oulita has strayed into a wood near the chateau ; and there the Count, who has chosen to dismiss his retinue and walk through the wood alone, hears her well-remembered voice as she sings. The Count accosts her with some light badinage, of which Oulita has the best. Then they talk more gravely. Mitchka, the executioner at the chateau, watches them from behind a tree. Oulita recognises in the Count the man who followed her about at Moscow. He tells her that he came in the Count's train.

Then we are carried to the hall at the chateau, where the Small Wise Man is addressing the servants. He speaks from a barrel, on which he is seated :—

The illustrious Count von Straubenheim, who, with our permission, is about to marry into our family, intends to give to every member of the household—something which shall be good for him : great guerdon, liberal largesse. For you, Melchior, Nicholas, and Petrovitch (pointing out three fat men), he intends to ask for a week's fast, and three weeks' out-of-door's work in the woods. For you, Theodore, a sound scourging at the hands of gentle Mitchka, that you may know how to manage your horses better, and what are the feelings of an animal when it is whipped. For you, Dimitri, our illustrious son-in-law has thought deeply, and intends to ask the Prince to have your wife brought home from his other estate, because you always lived so happily together.

No wonder that the Small Wise Man held his own in that household. We doubt not the servants feared his tongue nearly as much as Mitchka's scourge.

The Prince, Princess, and their attendants enter ; as do the Count, Ermolaï, and their people. The Small Wise Man catechises the Count in a jocular manner as to his qualifications for marrying and becoming ambassador ; and when the Count and Prince go together to the banquet, he muses in a very different strain. He is pleased with the Count's appearance :

A noble presence and a thoughtful eye,
But sad.

And Oulita entering, he speaks to her wisely and kindly, in a fashion which reveals strongly to us the grand want which every thoughtful serf must never cease to feel. ' Study to get free, girl,' he says ; ' free, free, free, free ! ' We now overhear a conversation between the executioner Mitchka, and Vasili Androvitch, Prince Lanskof's steward ; from which we find that the steward has promised to pay Mitchka three thousand roubles if he can catch Oulita in any fault which may bring her under his lash. The steward's hope is that in such a case he may compel Oulita to become his wife, as the reward of his procuring her pardon. Vasili is quite aware that Oulita hates him ; but that does not matter, in his estimation. In the crowd of dancers in the hall the Count again meets Oulita : a confidence has grown up fast between them, and she tells her longing to be free. The Count declares that she shall be, and gives Oulita his ring as

a pledge. He has mingled unnoted with the throng in the hall, and Oulita is still unaware who he is. But she tells us she feels entranced and bewildered.

Meanwhile the Count seeks Ermolaï, and has an explanation with him. Ermolaï is startled to find that the Count has been quite aware that he was a spy of Grübner's, and is penetrated with remorse at the thought that, while aware of all this, the Count saved him from drowning in the Neva. He always loved the Count; and from this time forward he is his faithfully and friend. The Count tells him he loves Oulita, and is determined to make her free. He has thought of several plans. An adroit serf, Stépan, disguised as a merchant, will come to buy her. That scheme failing, the Count's servants are to create some great alarm, and bear her off in the tumult. Meanwhile there is to be a great hunt of several days' duration. Ermolaï is to remain behind: to send for Stépan, for money, for horses of the Ukraine breed: to watch Mitchka: to grow familiar with every corner of the huge chateau. And then the Count, left alone, soliloquises. He is determined to go through with his design, but he is not in the least blinded to the wrong he is doing:—

I am a knave, a double-dealing scoundrel,
To woo one girl the while I love another,
For I do love her—
What should I say of any other man?
But then our own misdeeds are quite peculiar,
White at the edges, shading into darkness,
Not wholly black like other men's enormities.
Theirs are the thunder-clouds; ours but the streaks

Across the setting sun. No, no! I'm not
A fool like that. I know full well 'tis base,
Supremely base; natheless it shall be done.
If there were time, some other course we might
Devise; but that's what scoundrels always say—
If there were time, they would replace, repay,
In virtue's silvery path they would walk leisurely.
I am not duped by that. Seeing it all,
Foreseeing all the misery, the mischief,
I'll do 't, I say, and take the guilt upon me.
She shall be free.

Thus ends the First Act. It has indeed wrought an extraordinary change on the Count's feelings and position. The cool, pensive, unenergetic student of theological books, whose great aim was the progress of Russia, has had the latent fire of his nature touched at last.

In the Second Act we have the working of the Count's scheme. The hunt is over: the Prince and Count have returned to the chateau. The Small Wise Man has preceded them: cautioned the Princess that a merchant has arrived to buy Oulita and her fine voice for the Imperial Opera: advised that Oulita should not sing her best in his presence. Stépan, a shrewd fellow, appears: tells the Prince he has heard of Oulita, and with many disparaging remarks, desires to hear her sing. The Count, consulted by the Prince, speaks slightly of Oulita, and artfully suggests that the Prince's hunting-ground was somewhat hemmed in by an adjoining property, which might be bought. Oulita sings: but she has overheard the Count's remarks: she now knows who he

is, and she wilfully sings to the very best of her power. She sings two songs : we extract the former as a specimen of the author's lyric art. It gives us the story of *The End of the Rebel Stenko-Razin's Love* : a story which is exactly true.

The barge was moored on Volga's shore, the stream
Went murmuring sorrowfully past,
The water-lilies played amidst the gleam
Their golden armour, moon-lit, cast.

Mute sat the Persian captive by her mate,
And gazed at her lover askance ;
A little of love and something of hate
Were couched in that dubious glance.

'Base that I am,' he cried, 'dear stream, to thee,
Who, rebel too, with willing waves
Hast borne my armies up to victory,
And floated down the gold and slaves.'

He mused ; he turned ; and smiling on her charms,
He met that look of love and hate ;
Lightly he took her in his mailèd arms,
And casting, left her to her fate.

One lily more went shimmering 'midst the gleam
Their golden armour, moon-lit, cast ;
That lily slowly sank beneath the stream ;
Volga went sadly murmuring past.

'Murmur no more,' the chief replied, 'no more :
What I loved best to thee I gave.'
His fierce men shuddered, but from fear forbore
The Persian lady's life to save.

The songs are received with great applause, and

when silence follows Stépan criticises in true musical cant :—

There is a something, and there is not a something. There is a feeling and there is not a feeling. But there are makings, makings, makings. The G is better than the Freduccini's G.

And after more in the like tone, he offers the Prince thirty thousand roubles. But the old gentleman is so vain of Oulita's triumph, that he absolutely refuses to part with her on any terms : and thus fails the Count's first idea.

But instant action becomes necessary. The Princess upbraids Oulita severely for singing so well, contrary to her arrangement ; and goes on to speak of her meeting the Count in the wood. Oulita replies sharply : the Princess sentences her to Mitchka's lash in the morning. The Count upon this determines to rescue her that night. He is well aware of the risk he runs in the hands of the old Prince's vassals ; but will brave it all. Oulita comes to him, and begs his intercession for her. He replies coldly : but conveys in whispered interjected sentences his plan for her rescue. A striking scene follows, in which Vasili, who thinks he has Oulita in his power, tries entreaties and threats with equal unsuccess to gain her consent to be his wife. The Count and Ermolaï deliberate. They have arranged to fire the chateau in the night, and carry Oulita away. Ermolaï, with his tastes formed under Grübner, is delighted with the tact exhibited in the Count's plan : and when he leaves to arrange with the men, the Count thus speaks :—

We shall succeed—I will not let a doubt
Intrude upon my mind,—we shall succeed.
This one injustice may be remedied.
But then the things that have been—why they come
Upon me now I wot not : hideous deeds
Long numbered with the past. The Earth may smile,
And deck herself each May, vain thing ! with flowers,
And seem forgetful of the cruelties
Enacted on her ever-changing stage,
Till every spot upon the storied surface
Is rank with tragic memories : beauteous slaves,
Like dear Oulita, forced to endure, half-crazed,
Caresses which they loathe—and children slain
Before their mother's eyes—and women murdered
(Happy if murdered soon) in the dear presence
Of those who till that moment ever looked at them
With reverent tenderness, and now dare not look ;
Whose corded limbs, straining in agony,
Have lost—the wretch's last resort—the power
To give them death. * * *

The earth may smile, I say,
But like a new-made widow's mirth, it shocks one.
And she, the earth, should never quit her weeds ;
And should there come a happier race upon her,
Ever there'll be a sighing of the wind,
A moaning of the sea, to hint to that
More favoured race what we poor men have suffered.
There must have been a history, they'll say,
To be interpreted by all these sighs
And moans.

It is indeed a strange inconsistency, between the beauty and gaiety of external nature, and the wickedness and misery of man. And it has existed ever since the Fall. The Vale of Siddim was 'as the garden of the Lord,'—fair as another Eden : the black blot there was man. And the natural beauty and the human

wickedness had to be dashed from Creation together. 'At that one spot, it is far towards four thousand years, since Nature bloomed and Man sinned,—for the last time.'* We remember, too, what thought it was that came sadly to the mind of Bishop Heber, as he breathed the spicy air of Ceylon. Many a sad heart must have felt the sunshine and the green leaves a dreary mockery of the gloom within. And how hard it is to feel, that beyond that cheerful veil, there is hidden a Being of infinite power and infinite justice, who looks down quietly on the scene, and lets the world go on! Well, things will be set right some day.

His plans being thus arranged, the Count proceeds to the Hall, where there is a grand banquet. The Governor of the province proposes the health of the Count and his affianced bride, in a speech which is a happy imitation, by no means caricatured, of the speeches common in England after public dinners. In the middle of the banquet, somewhat prematurely, the flames break out. Great confusion follows, amid which Stépan bears off Oulita. But he is intercepted and brought back by Mitchka, who, as well as Vasili, had suspected the Count's design. The Count kills Mitchka: then he and Stépan bind Vasili, whom the latter must now take with him, as a refractory serf. Then the Count hurries Oulita off, with the words which close the Second Act.

I said you should be free, and free you are.

Your horses wait; the road is clear to Moscow.

He goes with you (*pointing to Stépan*), and will ensure your safety.

* Foster.

Nearer : a word ! I loathe this hateful marriage.

'Tis forced upon me by the Czar. Escape

I may, and then—

No ! this is not the time—

When you are wholly free, you can reject me.

In the Third Act we are at Moscow. Grübner has guessed correctly as to the share the Count had in the fire at the Prince's chateau, about which the Prince has been constantly complaining to the police. Neither the Prince nor Princess has had the slightest suspicion. Oulita has been safely conveyed to Moscow, and is under the Count's care. The Count is maintaining appearances with the Princess ; but is afraid of Siberia, to which the arson and homicide at the chateau would certainly send him, if brought home to him ; and is perplexed how to deal honourably with the Princess, whose nature, with its fierce mixture of good and evil, is not one to be trifled with. Grübner has stated his suspicions to the Princess, who resolves to have an explanation with the Count. Accordingly, we have a striking scene, in which the Princess tells the Count that the police are on Oulita's track, and threatens fearful vengeance upon her when taken. The Count manfully avows what he has done, and leaves the Princess in a whirl of rage. But she admires and loves the Count still ; and it is on Oulita that she determines her vengeance shall be wreaked.

However, she relents. A little later, while the Count is with Oulita, the police enter the house and seize her, to carry her back to Prince Lanskof. But their plans are disconcerted by Stépan producing a bill of sale, signed in due form by the Prince, which shows

that Oulita has been fairly sold to Stépan. The Princess, at a masked ball in the Kremlin, had placed this in the Count's hand. The police have to give up their prey. And when Grübner enters after a while with a file of soldiers, he finds that he is duped, and that Oulita is beyond his reach.

At the beginning of the Fourth Act, we find that the Count feels the meshes of the police closing round him. He is in his house at St. Petersburg, when Stépan enters to tell him that spies are now watching his house on every side. The Count feels that the odds against him are too great, and he must be beaten at last. The Czar, too, is becoming cold.

We next find Oulita in a room at St. Petersburg, working at embroidery. She is perfectly happy ; but change is near. The Small Wise Man has found out her retreat, and comes to tell her of the Princess's wrath, and the storming and vapouring of her father. And now it breaks on poor Oulita's mind what peril the Count is incurring for her sake. She resolves to leave him, lest she should bring him to ruin ; and as a last resort, asks the Small Wise Man to give her poison which she might have within her reach. Then a most beautiful scene follows between Oulita and the Count. Her eyes, now awakened, see the traces of ceaseless anxiety and alarm on his altered face ; and he, wearied out, falls into deep sleep as he is telling her of his travels in other lands. Half-awaking, he thinks he is speaking to the Czar, and tells him that ' if he but knew her, he would pardon all.' He sinks to sleep again ;

and Oulita, resolute, though broken-hearted, leaves her farewell written, and hastens away.

She has taken a desperate resolution. We next find the Princess in her chamber, brooding upon her wrongs, and wrought up to a tigress-fury. Even as she is declaring what fearful vengeance she would take of Oulita, Oulita enters and kneels at her feet. The scene which follows is one of the most striking in the play; and the more so that our extracts have been only of detached speeches, we shall quote this dialogue entire.

OULITA.

Madam, an outcast girl implores the pardon
She dares not hope for.

PRINCESS.

Ha ! He has left you then :

And you return, in those becoming robes,
To penitence and virtue—rather late,
Methinks.

Speak, girl, unless you wish me to call Mitchka.
Mitchka is dead, you think ; there lives another.
Say, has the Count forsaken you ?

OULITA (*rising*).

The Count !

What Count ?

PRINCESS.

Why this surpasses patience ! What Count, minx,—
That Count who was to be my husband, wretch ;
That Count who, to his eminent dishonour,
Stole you away—set fire to his friend's palace—
Slew that friend's servants—decked you out, great lady,
In this fine garb—who broke his plighted word
For you,—the Count von Straubenheim.

OULITA.

You know, then ?

PRINCESS.

There is no thread of his and your intrigues
Unknown to me. He told me of your love.

OULITA.

Permit me now to speak. Of a return,
You spoke, to virtue. There is no return.
A woman might have thought more charitably,
Of any sister-woman, though a serf:
Madam, there's no return, I say, to virtue,
And none to penitence, though much to sorrow.
I loved the Count, 'tis true, yet not to love
I fled, but to escape a shame one maiden
Should hardly have inflicted on another.
I saw the Count again. I listened—who
Would not ?—to his fond words and vows repeated
To make this slave in other climes his wife.
But soon the bloodhounds were upon the track.
I heard, or seemed to hear, the avenger's baying,
Marked the ignoble lines of care—his care
For me—indenting that majestic brow :
'Twas then that I divined his danger, sought
To save his life, myself surrendering
To all your sternest cruelty might do.
I am too late, and am prepared to bear
The now most thriftless, useless penalty.
But hear: men are most wayward in their fancies ;
He should have worshipped at your shrine, great Princess.
Perhaps it was your very excellence
Made him decline to such a thing as me.
He ever spoke of you with tenderest homage.

PRINCESS.

He did ?

OULITA.

He did ; and one there was who sat beside him,
Who joyed to hear your praises, for the Count
Said ever you were most magnanimous,—
Great as a foe, and splendid as a friend.

PRINCESS.

And nothing else, the while he played with those
Fair tresses, said the Count,—nothing about
My furious temper, and the difference 'twixt .
Mine and the soft Oulita's,—nothing, girl ?
Sealing his pretty sayings with a kiss—
The false, the perjured man.

OULITA.

Not false, nor perjured.

PRINCESS.

Ah, now we stir the meek one.

OULITA.

What he said

In rare disparagement of your great charms,
Was such indeed as might make any woman
Desire the more to win the man who said it.—
By that dread suffering image that looks down
On us this moment, I would die to win
His love for you ; would worm myself into
His heart, to find an entrance there for you,
And thus ensure his safety and your joy :
That safety being—for I'll not deceive you,—
The chiefest aim in life for me. Dear Princess—

[*Puts her arm round the* PRINCESS.]

You used to let me call you dear,—be true
To your great mind. Let's set our women's wits
To work, to make the man love you. There only
His safety lies—and there his happiness.
'Tis you alone are worthy of the Count.

With you to aid his plans, to fix his purposes,
Partake success with him, console in failure,
Cheering with your bright wit his melancholy,
He will become the greatest man in Russia.

PRINCESS.

How blind is pride! The Count was right, Oulita,
Were I a man I should have loved you best.
Save him we will, but not for me, Oulita.
I am not worthy of him, nor of you.
Nay, let me kneel to you. Could you but know
What savage thoughts I've had, you ne'er could love me.
Let me but kiss—that shudder was not wickedness—
I do not grudge his fondness for that cheek.
I meant that I must love what he had loved,
And I do love it [*kisses her*]. We'll rest together, dear,
And early morn shall find us planning rescue.
His peril is most urgent. I did not
Betray him; nay, I saved him once. Your Marie
Was not in all things bad,—not always wicked.
Ah, could you but have known, that fatal day
My heedless passion threatened you with stripes—

[*Puts her hand before her eyes.*]

I am ashamed to look at you, and say
The base word stripes,—could you have known how tenderly
I felt to you, never so much before,
And how I roamed and roamed about in agony,
Contriving some excuse to make you ask
Your pardon, and none came, you must, you would
Have pitied me.
Down at your feet I could have humbly knelt,
Imploring you to kneel at mine, Oulita;
Indeed I could. But then my odious pride
Stiffened my soul again.

OULITA.

But more, you say,
Than ever, then, you loved your own Oulita.

PRINCESS.

What is the worth of my love that could do
So little battle with my pride ?

OULITA.

We poor ones,
Who from our infancy are curbed and bent,
And bounded in, know little of the pangs
The great endure in mastering their pride
Long-seated, deep-engrained.

PRINCESS.

Generous Oulita,
Always some foolish, fond excuse for me.
I almost feel I love the Count the more
For being wise and great enough to love thee,
Discerning thy rare qualities beneath
The sorry mask of serfdom—
The world would scarce believe its mocking eyes
If it could see two women loving madly
One man, and yet the fonder of each other.
Is it not so, Oulita ?

OULITA.

Dearest, it is.

PRINCESS.

Not *dearest*, I must tell the Count if you
Say that fond word to any other soul.

[OULITA *hides her head on the* PRINCESS's *breast. They*
embrace—they kneel before the image in the corner of
the room. The curtain falls.

Thus the noble womanhood of the Princess's nature
asserts itself: and thus the Fourth Act ends.

At the beginning of the Fifth Act, the Count, awaking
from a fearful dream, finds Oulita's letter, telling him

she has fled to save him from ruin, and begging that he would never let it be known that he had aided her in her escape. Even as he reads it, Grübner and his men are upon him. The Count retains his firmness, but tells Grübner that he is beaten. He is carried away, to be placed before the Czar.

And now, in Prince Lanskof's house, Oulita meets the Small Wise Man, and claims his promise to provide her poison. He gives her what, rubbed upon the lips, will in three minutes cause death ; but he speaks as follows :—

Promise me this. Before
 You use this fatal gift of mine, bring back—
 Bring clearly back—to a calm mind, the days
 When first your mother's smile was dear, when first
 She trusted to your care your little brother,
 And anxiously the little nurse upheld
 The child, as you both strayed beside the stream—
 I've often wandered there—which marked your garden,
 To you a world of waters ; then your father,
 The ponderous man, laid his large hand upon
 Your head, saying you were his wise Oulita—
 Then think, was this the end for which they toiled,
 And if, on thinking thus, you can resolve
 In one rash moment to obliterate
 What they so prized—why then God's blessing on you.
 I can say nothing more.

We are next carried to the palace, where we find the Emperor and Grübner in conversation. We find that the Count is already on his way into Siberian exile ; but the Emperor, who loves him, bitterly laments that there is no loophole for pardoning him. Grübner goes, and then a serf almost forces her way into the imperial

presence. It is Oulita, now resolute in despair. A noble scene follows. She boldly tells the Emperor that greater men than the Count have loved where they should not: she justifies the Count against the charge of arson and murder; says Mitchka fell in fair fight; and appealing to the Emperor closely, declares that if the Countess whom he loved were sentenced to be scourged, and he burnt down a city to save her, she would not think less of the Czar. The Czar thinks she wishes to follow the Count; but is astonished when he learns that what she wishes is that he should wed the Princess. The Emperor grasps at the idea: says all might then be hushed; but adds that neither Princess nor Count would consent. But the poor Princess, the gentle woman at last, has come with Oulita in a page's dress, and when the Emperor asks her if she will marry the Count, reminding her at the same time of her own slighted affection and her father's wrongs, she replies humbly that she will, and not seek his love, nor ask him to live with her. The Emperor instantly signs a pardon, and tells them to hasten with it along the road to Siberia. Still he fears that the Count, however much he loves liberty, will hardly make a marriage serve as a means of safety. But he bids them God speed, and says at least they may try.

Then we are at a village on the road to Siberia. We hear in the distance the 'Song of the Exiles;' and a train of exiles enters, among whom is the Count. Ermolaï is there, kindly attending his fallen master; and the Count eagerly asks him of Oulita. There enter Oulita, the Princess veiled, and the Small Wise Man.

They look anxiously among the prisoners, and at length recognise the Count. The Count sees Oulita, and bursts into a joyful speech, assuring her that the evil dreaded so much dwindles when it comes at last. She tells the Count of the conditional pardon she bears, and entreats him to marry the Princess. He declares that he is incapable of such baseness. Oulita then brings the Small Wise Man, hoping that his reasonings may move the Count : but the Count states the case to him ; and he declares the Count is right. The Count then speaks to Oulita ; says he will yet return and claim her :—

If not, I have a loving memory always by me,
Something to think of when I sit beside
My hut, amidst the unheeded falling snow,
Of evenings, when my sorry work is done.
Better so sit, so thinking, than in palaces—
A thought of inextinguishable baseness
Fast clinging round the soul.

Then he asks Oulita if she had often thought of him :—

Once only, Edgar ;—
But that thought lasted long.

And still entreating him to wed the Princess, and so save himself for usefulness and honour, she puts the poison to her lips, and dies as she joins their hands. Poor Oulita judged that by thus unselfishly sacrificing herself, she would make the Count feel himself free.

It was a useless sacrifice. He tells the Princess he loves her now for her true love for the dead ; but he has no heart to offer. No word says the Princess,

her haughty spirit quite cowed and broken ; Ermolai receives his master's last request to bury Oulita where she died, and to mark her grave ; and as the sad song of the exiles is resumed, the Count, seemingly stunned beyond present sense of his utter desolation, kisses Oulita's face, and resumes his march towards Siberia. Ah, the agony and wildness of grief will be upon him to-morrow ! And by the fair serf's corpse, in whose sad lot and noblest heart we have grown to feel an interest so profound, there sits, with covered face, the Small Wise Man ;—a jester to smile at no more, but a figure of overwhelming pathos.

L'honneur oblige ! How hard some men would find it to understand the invisible restraints that drove the Count into exile, while fortune, fame, and power were beckoning him back if he would but come ! And how hard, too, to understand Oulita's noble self-devotion ; and the self-devotion of the Princess, scarcely less complete !

And now, as we draw our notice of the tragedy to a close, we turn over the pages once more : and, as at every opening of the volume, our eye falls upon some beautiful felicity of expression, some life-like incident that almost startles by the every-day reality it gives the story, some thought so deep, gentle, and kind, wherein the author's own mind speaks to his reader,—we feel how far such an abstract as our space enables us to give, falls short of the effect which would be produced by the perusal of the play itself on the heart of every generous man and gentle woman. We do not think

that our nerves are shattered into a morbid facility of emotion, and the hand that writes these lines is not a woman's ; yet we should hardly like to tell how often the tear has started as we read this book,—how many hours it kept sleep away,—or even how often and how long we have paused and mused with the finger in the half-closed volume. We do not pretend to much acquaintance with stage-craft ; and it is possible enough that the very thoughtfulness which makes *Oulita* so fascinating to the solitary scholar, might detract from its power of popular effect were it represented on the stage. For ourselves, we do not think it would. There is incident rapid and stirring enough to keep attention ever on the stretch : and the reflections are such that, while arresting the thoughtful reader who can follow the track along which they point, they will touch the mind and heart of average humanity. Of course, if *Hamlet* were published at the present day, many critics would call it dull and heavy, and many theatrical managers would not risk its presentation on their boards. And the variety of rhythm and cadence, the occasional abruptness and deviation from common metrical rules, which render the versification of a vigorous drama such as some judges would call unmusical, seem to our mind a beauty and an excellence in verse which is meant to be spoken and heard, rather than to be read ; which represents real and passing life ; which is put in the mouth of many diverse characters ; and which is to be listened to without intermission for two or three successive hours. *Smoothness*, in Pope's use of the word, would pall and disgust by

so long continuance. And only great variety of metrical character—even the occurrence of occasional discords—can furnish the similitude of life. When one goes to the Opera, one must be content to leave common sense at the door, and to take for granted that all that passes shall go on the basis of an extreme conventionality. But in the case of a tragedy, if the writing and the presentation be worthy, the spectator should forget that he is not looking at reality. The author of *Oulita* has kept this in view. Yet while remembering that unvaried melody of rhythm would result in satiety and tediousness, no one knows better how to add the charm of music to thoughts with which it accords: Very beautifully, in the lines which follow, have we Mr. Thackeray's ever recurring theory of the prevalence of the affections even in the trimness of modern life :—

So dear that in the memory she remains,
Like an old love, who would, indeed, have been
Our only love, but died ; and all the past
Is full of her untried perfections, while
Amidst the unknown recesses of our hearts
Enthroned she sits, in tenderest mist of thought,
Like the soft brilliancy of autumn haze,
Seen at the setting of the sun : and such
Is Venice—to pronounce her name is sweet,
Just as I love to say the word 'Oulita.'

IX.

THE ORGAN QUESTION.*

‘**R**EPUBLICANS are born, not made,’ says the lively author of *Kaloolah*; and so, we have long held, are those persons who may be called true-blue or divine-right Presbyterians. A certain preponderance of the sterner elements, a certain lack of capacity of emotion, and disregard of the influence of associations,—in brief, a certain hardness of character to be found chiefly in Scotland, is needed to make your out-and-out follower of the bold, honest, but narrow Covenanters. The great mass of the educated members of the Church of Scotland have no pretensions to the name of divine-right Presbyterians: Balfour of Burley would have scouted them; their fundamental principle is briefly this: that Presbytery suits the Scotch people best; and Prelacy the English: each system having just as much and just as little inspired authority as the other. Dr. Candlish’s book

* *The Organ Question: Statements by Dr. Ritchie and Dr. Porteous for and against the Use of the Organ in Public Worship, in the Proceedings of the Presbytery of Glasgow, 1807-8.* With an Introductory Notice, by Robert S. Candlish, D.D. Edinburgh. 1850.

reminds us that out-and-out holders of views which have quietly dropt into abeyance in most Scotch minds, are still to be found in the northern part of this island. In arguing with such, we feel a peculiar difficulty. We have no ground in common. Things which appear to us as self-evident axioms, they flatly deny. For instance, it appears to us just as plain as that two and two make four, that a church should be something essentially different in appearance from an ordinary dwelling; that there is a peculiar sanctity about the house of God, making tea-parties and jocular addresses in it unutterably revolting; that the worship of God should be made as solemn in itself as possible, and as likely as possible to impress the hearts of the worshippers; that if music be employed in the worship of God, it should be the best music to be had; and that if there be a noble instrument especially adapted to the performance of sacred music, with something in its very tones that awes the heart and wakens devotional feeling, *that* is beyond all question the instrument to have in our churches. Now all this the true-blue Covenanters at once denies. He holds that all that is required of a church is protection from the weather, with seat-room, and, perhaps, ventilation; he denies that any solemnised feeling is produced by noble architecture, or that the Gothic vault is fitter for a church than for a factory; he drinks tea, eats cookies, applauds with hands and feet, and roars with laughter in church, with no sense of incongruity; he taboos Christmas-day, with all its gentle and gracious remembrances; he maintains that the barest of all

worship is likeliest to be true spiritual service ; he holds that there is something essentially evil and sinful in the use of an organ in church ; that the organ is ‘ a portion of the trumpery which ignorance and superstition had foisted into the house of God ;’ that to introduce one is to ‘ convert a church into a concert-room,’ and ‘ to return back to Judaism ;’ and that ‘ the use of instrumental music in the worship of God is neither lawful, nor expedient, nor edifying.’*

We confess that we do not know how to argue with men who honestly hold these views. The things which they deny appear to us so perfectly plain already, that no argument can make them plainer. If any man say to us, ‘ I don’t feel in the least solemnised by the noble cathedral and the pealing anthem,’ all we can reply is simply, ‘ Then you are different from human beings in general ;’ but it is useless to argue with him. If you argue a thesis at all, you can argue it only from things less liable to dispute than itself ; and in the case of all these matters attached to Presbytery, though not forming part of its essence, this is impossible. Whenever we have had an argument with an old impracticable Presbyterian, we have left off with the feeling that some people are born such ; and if so, there is no use in talking to them.

But all these notions to which allusion has been made, are attached to Presbytery by vulgar prejudice ; they form no part of its essence, and enlightened Presbyterians now-a-days are perfectly aware of the fact. There is no earthly connexion in the nature of things

* *The Organ Question*, pp. 108, 125, 128, &c.

between Presbyterian Church-government and flat-roofed meeting-houses, the abolition of the seasons of the Christian year,* a bare and bald ritual, a tuneless 'precentor' howling out of all time, and a congregation joining as musically as the frogs in Aristophanes. The educated classes in Scotland have for the most part come to see this : and in the large towns, even among the most rigid of Dissenters, we find church-like places of worship, decent singing, and the entire service conducted with propriety. And one of the marked signs of vanishing prejudice is, that a general wish is springing up for the introduction of that noble instrument, so adapted to church music, the organ. Things have even gone so far that the principal ecclesiastical court of a considerable Scotch dissenting denomination, has left it to be decided by each congregation for itself, whether it will have an organ or not. And several dissenting ministers of respectable standing and undoubted Presbyterianism, are pushing the matter strongly.

We should have fancied that men of sense in North Britain would have been pleased to find that there is a prospect of the organ being generally introduced : and this upon the broad ground that church music would thus be made more solemn, more worthy of God's worship, more likely to awaken devotional feeling. We should have fancied that there was no

* We happened once to be in Dr. Cumming's church on an Easter-Sunday, and found that the prayers and sermon were as full of reference to the season as the service for the day in the Prayer Book ; perhaps more so.

need for special pleading on the part of the advocates of the organ, and assuredly no room for lengthened argument on the part of its opponents. The entire argument, we think, may be summed up thus : Whatever makes church music more solemn and solemnising is good ; the organ does this : therefore, let us have the organ. If a man denies our first proposition, he is a person who cannot be reasoned with. If he denies the second, he has no musical taste. If he admits both, yet denies the conclusion, then he is either prejudiced or yielding to prejudice. And so the discussion ends. And though we do not by any means hold that the majority is necessarily right, still in this world we have, after all, no further appeal than to the mass of educated men ; and they have decided 'the organ question.' We believe that the Scotch Church and its offshoots are the only Christian sects that taboo the organ.

We should not have been surprised to find opposition to the organ on the part of the unreasoning crowd, who regard it as a rag of Popery, and whose hatred of everything at any time associated with *that* is quite wonderful. But it startles us to find reasonable and educated Scotchmen maintaining that an organ is an idol, and that its use is not only inexpedient, but absolutely sinful and forbidden. We have read with considerable interest, and with great surprise, Dr. Candlish's publication on *The Organ Question*, elicited by 'the alarm he feels at certain recent movements on behalf of instrumental music in Presbyterian worship' (p. 5). His part in it is confined to an introductory essay, which does little justice to his acknowledged

high ability : and instead of arguing the matter for himself, he prefers to reproduce what he regards as a complete discussion of the subject, in two documents, written nearly half a century since. The circumstances under which these were written are as follows :—

In the centre of a considerable square, opening out of the Salt-Market of Glasgow (indissolubly associated with the memory of Bailie Nicol Jarvie and Rob Roy), there stands the elegant church of St. Andrew. It is a *facsimile*, on a reduced scale, of St. Martin's-in-the-fields, at Charing Cross. Fifty years since, Dr. Ritchie, the incumbent of that church, in accordance with the wish of his entire congregation, one of the most intelligent in Scotland, introduced an organ. On Sunday, the 23rd of August, 1807, the sole organ which has been used since the Reformation in any Scotch church *in Scotland*,* was used for the first and last time. Extreme horror was excited among the ultra-Conservatives of the Church. Dr. Ritchie was forthwith pulled up by the Presbytery of Glasgow, and getting frightened at his own audacity, he declared at its meeting 'that he would not again use an organ in the public worship of God, without the authority of the Church.' Upon this the Presbytery passed a resolution to the effect 'That the Presbytery are of opinion that the use of the organ

* Organs are not unfrequently found in Scotch churches *out of Scotland*. The Scotch churches maintained by the East India Company at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, are provided with organs, which are regularly used. The case is the same with several of the Scotch churches in the West Indies, and with one long established at Amsterdam. Presbyterians in America use organs habitually.

in the public worship of God, is contrary to the law of the land, and to the law and constitution of our Established Church, and therefore prohibit it in all the churches and chapels within their bounds; and with respect to Dr. Ritchie's conduct in this matter, they are satisfied with his declaration.' Dr. Ritchie gave in a paper containing his reasons of dissent; and a committee of the Presbytery prepared a reply to it. These two papers form the substance of the book now sent forth with Dr. Candlish's name.

The commotion excited in Scotland by the introduction of the organ was indescribable. Dr. Ritchie was accused of 'the monstrous crime of worshipping God by images, of violating the articles of the Union, of demolishing the barriers for the security of our religion, of committing a deed of perjury to ordination vows' (p. 61). A howl of execration was directed against the man who had exhibited the flagrant insolence of introducing what John Knox is recorded, we believe without the least foundation, to have described as a 'kist fu o' whistles.' Pamphlets and caricatures were numerous. Dr. Candlish thinks it worth while to preserve the remembrance of a picture 'which represents Dr. Ritchie, who was about the time of these proceedings translated to Edinburgh, travelling as a street musician, with a barrel organ strapped across his shoulder, and solacing himself with the good old tune, "I'll gang nae mair to yon toun"' (p. 28). What entrancing fun!

Dr. Candlish's own sentiments are manfully expressed. He thinks that 'cogent arguments can be

urged, both from reason and Scripture, against the practice of using the organ' (p. 14). He hopes that his present publication 'will make many who have been almost led away by the plausibilities that are so easily got up on the side of organs, pause before they lend themselves to what may cause a most perilous agitation' (p. 31). This is fair enough, because there may be prejudices in the mass of the Scotch people so strong that it would be inexpedient to shock them by introducing instrumental music. But Dr. Candlish goes on, in words which bewilder us, to give his opinion on the essential merits of the question :—

It is not that I am afraid of a controversy on this subject, or of its issue, so far as the merits of the question are concerned. I believe it is a question which touches some of the highest and deepest points of Christian theology. Is the temple destroyed : is the temple worship wholly superseded ? Have we, or have we not, priests and sacrifices among us now ? Does the Old Testament itself point to anything but the 'fruit of the lips' as the peace-offering or thank-offering of gospel times ? Is there a trace in the New Testament of any other mode of praise ? *For my part, I am persuaded that if the organ be admitted, there is no barrier, in principle, against the sacerdotal system in all its fulness,—against the substitution again, in our whole religion, of the formal for the spiritual, the symbolical for the real !*

And then, remembering that this may grieve Anglicans, Dr. Candlish goes on kindly to say that the Church of England never attained light enough to reject the organ, and may therefore be permitted the use of a carnal contrivance which the more enlightened Scotch Churchmen would be retrograding in taking up. A position at which the organ is retained, is well enough for darkened Southrons ; but would be a

wretched falling off in the followers of Cameron and Renwick.

Dr. Ritchie appears from his *Statement* to have been an enlightened and educated man, a good deal in advance of his age, and who had miscalculated the consequences of setting up the organ. The pear was not ripe ; it is hardly so yet, after the lapse of fifty years. He adduces just such arguments in favour of instrumental music, as would present themselves to any intelligent mind, modified somewhat by his knowledge of the prejudices of the tribunal he addressed. His statement is written with elegance, and temperately expressed. He sets out by stating that the use of instrumental music in worship has its foundation in the best feelings of human nature, prompting men to employ with reverence, according to the means they possess, all their powers in expressing gratitude to their Creator. This use cannot be traced in sacred history from the time of Moses down to that of David : but David not only employed instrumental music himself, but calls ‘on all nations, all the earth, to praise the Lord as he did, with psaltery, with harp, with organ, with the voice of a psalm.’ His psalms are constantly sung in Christian worship ; ‘and can it be a sin to sing them, as was done by the original composer, with the accompaniment of an organ?’ Christ never found fault with instrumental music, neither did Paul or John ; the latter indeed tells us that he beheld in heaven ‘Harpers harping with their harps.’ During the earlier centuries, the persecutions to which Christians were exposed probably suffered no thought about a matter not essential : but the use of organs

became general in the time of dawning light. At the Reformation it was felt that their use was no essential part of Popery ; and thus it was retained by all the reformed churches, those of Luther and Calvin alike, except the Church of Scotland. Organs did not find favour in Scotland, because religious persecution had excited in that country a great horror of whatever had been used in popish or prelatical worship, as altars, crosses, organs. But although the organ was associated with Episcopacy, there is no necessary connection :—

And in the use of an organ in church during public praise, I cannot, for my life, after long and serious attention to the subject, discover even an approach to any violation either of the purity or uniformity of our worship. For who will or can allege that an organ is an innovation upon the great object of worship ?—we all, I trust, worship the one God, through the one Mediator. Or upon the subject of praise ?—for we all sing the same psalms and paraphrases in the same language, all giving thanks for the same mercies. Or upon the posture of the worshippers ?—for we all sit, as becomes Presbyterians. Or upon the tunes sung ?—for we sing only such as are in general use. Or upon the office of the precentor ?—for he still holds his rank, and employs the commanding tones of the organ for guiding the voices of the people. What, then, is it ? It is a help, a support given to the precentor's voice, for enabling him more steadily, and with more dignity, to guide the voice of the congregation, and thus to preserve not only uniformity, but that unity of voice which is so becoming in the public service, which so pleasingly heightens devout feelings, and prevents that discord which so easily distracts the attention of the worshippers.

Such is an outline of Dr. Ritchie's argument. Our readers will, we doubt not, be curious to know what considerations, partaking of the nature of argument, can be adduced against the use of organs in church. Most

people, we should think, would be more curious to know *this*, than to have arguments in favour of a usage for which common sense is authority sufficient. Now, had the committee of the Glasgow Presbytery assigned their true reason for rejecting the organ, it might have been very briefly set out : it was simply to be different from the Prelatists. A divine-right Presbyterian does not think of discussing the fitness of any observance on the ground of its own merits. He brings the matter to a shorter issue—viz., Is it used in the Anglican Church or is it not ? If he goes beyond that, his final question would be, What did John Knox say about it ? *His* infallibility is held in Scotland much more strongly and practically than the Pope's is in Italy. If any man in a Scotch Church Court should venture to impugn anything that ever was said by the Reformer, he would draw a perfect storm of indignation upon his own head. We repeat, there is no doctrine more decidedly held in Scotland than that of the infallibility of John Knox. Perhaps that of the impeccability of Calvin should be regarded as a companion doctrine. *His* vagaries as to the Sabbath preclude his reception as infallible. We have seen a paper by an eminent minister of a Scotch dissenting 'body,' whose purpose was to prove that Calvin was right in burning Servetus. The argument, so far as we could make it out, appeared to be that Calvin's doing so was right, because Calvin did it. Of course, had Servetus burned Calvin, it would have been quite a different thing.

As for the reply to Dr. Ritchie's Statement (which was drawn up by a certain Dr. Porteous), we shall at

once say of it that it appears to us characterised by ignorance, stupidity, and vulgarity, in the very highest degree. Dr. Ritchie's paper dealt with broad principles: *this* is mainly employed in paltry personalities and misrepresentations. Its style bristles with such descriptions of instrumental music as 'will-worship,' 'superstitious rites,' 'converting a church into a concert room,' 'an organ *tickling* the ear of the audience' (the italics are the writer's own), 'the puerile amusement of pipes and organs,' &c. We shall endeavour to pick out from this very tedious lucubration whatever it contains in the nature of argument; and we believe that our readers will agree with us that the mere statement of the following objections to the organ is sufficient refutation of them. We give our references, lest we should be suspected of caricaturing Dr. Porteous's argument:—

1. Instrumental music in the worship of God is as much part of the Jewish system as circumcision: therefore, if circumcision be abolished, so is the organ (pp. 86-7). Instrumental music was essentially connected with sacrifice; and as sacrifice was abolished by Christ's death, so was instrumental music abolished (pp. 87-8). The New Testament, by prescribing a new way of worshipping God,—to wit, by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,—is to be understood as abolishing the old way, by instrumental music (p. 91). St. Paul, far from commending instrumental music, speaks of it with contempt—If I 'have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal' (p. 96). True, harps are spoken of by

St. John as in heaven ; but St. John was drawing on his recollection of the Temple service, and is not to be literally understood (pp. 97-8). So much for the argument from Scripture.

2. The Christians of the early centuries would have had organs, had it been right to have them. As they had them not, 'it is evident that they considered it unlawful to employ instrumental music in the worship of God. Both Arians and orthodox would have regarded themselves as returning back to Judaism, if they had permitted it in their public worship' (p. 108). We are surprised to find the Fathers quoted by a Presbyterian clergyman, but in this case they make in favour of his views. Justin Martyr says, 'Plain singing is not childish, but only the singing with lifeless organs : whence the use of such instruments, and other things fit for children, is laid aside' (pp. 109-10). Basil speaks of organs as 'the inventions of Jubal, of the race of Cain' (p. 111). Chrysostom says that instrumental music 'was only permitted to the Jews for the imbecility and grossness of their souls : but now, instead of organs, Christians must use the body to praise God' (p. 112). Jerome and Augustine speak in a similar strain. Thomas Aquinas, in the Schoolman age, says, 'In the old law, God was praised both with musical instruments and human voices. But the Church does not use musical instruments to praise God, lest she should seem to judaize' (p. 115). And we are told, on the authority of Eckhard, that Luther (among other hasty things which he said) said that '*organs were among the ensigns of Baal!*' (p. 119). There is no

doubt that Calvin declared that 'Instrumental music is not fitter to be adopted into the public worship of the Christian Church than the incense, the candlesticks, and the other shadows of the Mosaic law' (p. 121). Our reply to all this is, that the Fathers, Schoolmen, and Reformers, might fall into error: if the question is to be decided by authority, we could adduce a thousand authorities in favour of the organ for every one against it; these eminent men had no other grounds for forming their opinion than are patent to us, and it seems manifest to common sense that neither in reason nor Scripture are there any grounds to support the opinions they express. We appeal to the common sense of mankind, even from the judgment of Chrysostom, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin.

3. Dr. Porteous's next argument against the organ is, that the Fathers of the Scotch Church 'regarded instrumental music as the offspring of Judaism, and abhorred it as a relic of Popery, and too intimately connected with that prelatic form which our forefathers never could endure' (p. 132). 'It has been allowed by authors, foreign and domestic, that the genius of the Scotch people is much more musical than that either of the English, the Dutch, or the French. But the people of Scotland abhor the blending of the inventions of man with the worship of God. They conceive instrumental music inconsistent with the purity of a New Testament Church' (p. 134). Then 'Knox and Melville, Rutherford and Henderson, offer not one word in behalf of the organ. They allow it to perish unnoticed, as a portion of that trumpery which ignorance and superstition

had foisted into the house of God' (p. 140). 'The fixed, determined opposition to instrumental music' among the Scotch Reformers 'ariseth from *legal, political, moral,* and *Scriptural* grounds' (p. 140). We admit at once that the founders of the Scotch Church had an inveterate dislike for the organ; but as they give us no reason for their dislike, except the fact that the organ had been employed in prelatic worship, and the utterly groundless assertion that instrumental music was a purely Jewish observance, we cannot regard their dislike otherwise than as an irrational prejudice. The argument from Knox's opinion may be a very good one where men believe the infallibility of Knox, but with us it has no weight whatever. We regard ourselves quite as competent to form an opinion in this matter as Knox; and the argument from mere authority will not do in a case where the authorities quoted have no special weight, and are in a minority of one to a hundred.

4. The next argument is addressed exclusively to persons belonging to the Church of Scotland. At the Revolution, 'Prelacy was for ever abolished in Scotland;' and the organ is part of Prelacy (pp. 144-5). The people, at all events, regarded it as such (p. 145). And when it was stipulated at the union of the two kingdoms, that the established worship should continue, it was understood on all hands that this stipulation excluded instrumental music (pp. 150-161). Every clergyman at his ordination subscribes a formula, in which he 'sincerely owns the purity of worship presently authorised and practised in this Church, and that

he will constantly adhere to the same ; and that he will neither directly nor indirectly endeavour the prejudice and subversion thereof' (p. 162). But this purity of worship is destroyed by introducing an organ ; for ' by blending instrumental music with the human voice, the simple melody of our forefathers becomes immediately changed into a medley, composed of animate and inanimate objects ' (p. 165).

We do not think any comment is needful upon all this. We give another passage, which we presume is intended for an argument :—

Man being a reasonable creature, and a reasonable service being demanded from him by God, that reasonable service cannot so properly be performed by man as when he useth his voice alone. This is the vehicle which God hath given him to convey to his Maker the emotions of his soul. Musical instruments may indeed tickle the ear and please the fancy of fallen man. But is God to be likened to fallen man ? Organs are the mere invention of man, played often by hirelings who, while they modulate certain sounds, may possess a heart cold and hard as the nether millstone. You may, if you please, style such music the will-worship of the organist ; but you surely cannot, in common sense, denominate it the praise of devout worshippers, singing with grace, and making melody to the Lord in the heart.

The only passage in Dr. Porteous's argument which appears to us to partake of the nature of discussion *on the merits* of the question, is the following vulgarity :—

Your committee have heard your *amateurs* and *dilettanti* assert that their nerves have been completely overcome with the powerful tones of the organ, and the sublime *crash* of instrumental music in the oratorios of Handel. Your committee are willing to allow this musical effect ; but they believe, at the same time, that all the musical instruments that ever were used can never

produce upon the devout and contemplative mind that sublime and pathetic effect which the well regulated voice of 8000 children produced, when singing the praises of God in the cathedral of St. Paul's upon the recovery of our good old religious king. Away, then, with the cant of an organ's being so wonderfully calculated to increase the devotion of Christians! Your committee have sometimes had an opportunity of listening to instrumental music, in what is styled cathedral worship. It might for a little time please and surprise by its novelty; the effect, however, was very transitory, and sometimes produced ideas in the mind very different from devotion. Your committee believe that when the praises of God are sung by every individual, even of an unlettered country congregation, the effect is much more noble, and much more salutary to the mind of a Christian audience, than all the lofty artificial strains of an organ, extracted by a hired organist, and accompanied by a confused noise of many voices, taught at great expense to chant over what their hearts neither feel, nor their heads understand.

Now, as it appears to us, this passage is the only one in Dr. Porteous's long treatise which touches the merits of 'the organ question.' Here he fairly joins issue with the supporters of the organ on the question whether the use of that instrument does or does not render God's praise more solemn and affecting. He maintains that it does not. On the strongest of all evidence, our own experience, we maintain that it does. And we have no higher court to appeal to. We are just brought back to the principle with which we set out—the existence of two sorts or species of human constitution essentially different by nature. And in differing out and out from Dr. Porteous, we can but comfort ourselves with the belief that were the educated population of Christendom polled, we should be in a majority of a thousand to one. We

make bold to say, that were you to poll the educated people of Scotland, we should have a hundred to one in our favour.

It will amuse our readers to know that this enlightened clergyman, in closing his argument, bestows a parting kick upon the idolatrous organ, by reminding us that we read in the Book of Job, that the wicked of those days 'took the timbrel and the harp, and *rejoiced at the sound of the organ*' (Job, ch. xxi. v. 14, 15, p. 188). And when Nebuchadnezzar erected his golden image, the signal for its worship was 'the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music' (Daniel, ch. iii. v. 3, p. 189). What on earth can we say to the man who could seriously write this ?

We have thus set forth Dr. Porteous's argument against the organ ; an argument which Dr. Candlish tells us 'impressed him, when he first studied it, with the sort of sense of completeness which a satisfactory demonstration gives ; and a recent perusal has not lowered his opinion of it' (p. 30). For ourselves, it has impressed us with absolute wonder to think that any reasonable man could have written a treatise so filled with bigotry and absurdity. We could not think of setting ourselves to answer arguments whose folly is apparent on the first glance at them ; indeed, our fear is, that our readers may fancy we have intentionally caricatured them, and we beg to tender the assurance that we have set them out with scrupulous fairness. We lament to see that minds, naturally powerful and candid, can be cramped and cribbed by

gloomy prejudices to the extent exemplified in Drs. Porteous and Candlish, and we confidently make our appeal from them to the common sense of the people of Scotland. The great mass of educated Scotch people is fast becoming extricated from the vulgar prejudice against the organ. In every circle of society, the wish may be heard for its introduction, on the broad ground that it would be a great improvement; and that there is no reason whatever against it, except the prejudice of the first Scotch reformers against everything which had been used in popish or prelatic worship. The feeling is gaining ground in Scotland that this spirit of mere contrariety was allowed to go to a most unreasonable length. The spirit of the Covenanters was, 'Never mind if kneeling be the natural posture of prayer, and the one we ourselves always adopt in private; the Prelatists kneel in church, and therefore we shall stand. Never mind if the very necessity of using the lungs points to standing as the attitude for singing God's praise; the Prelatists stand, so we shall sit.' And there can be no question that the educated classes in Scotland, in laying aside the spirit of pure contrariety to Episcopacy, and looking at observances and estimating them by their own merits, *are* in so far departing from the true Presbyterian principle: if we are to understand by *that* the principle of the people who signed the Solemn League and Covenant, and thereby undertook to 'endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, and profaneness.'* No doubt the 'Came-

* *Solemn League and Covenant*, Section II.

ronians' and 'Original Seceders' of Scotland at the present day, are a great deal more like the Covenanters than is the Church of Scotland. Holding that for many reasons Presbytery is the best form of church-government for Scotland, the great majority of the clergy of the Scotch Church are equally persuaded that Episcopacy is the best form of church-government for England. And very many of the most influential among the elders of the Church of Scotland, say at once that they are Presbyterians in Scotland and Episcopalians in England. It would indeed be a wretched thing, if in days not over-friendly to ecclesiastical establishments, the Churches of England and Scotland, maintaining precisely the same doctrines, and differing solely in the non-essential of church-government, should ever cherish other than a spirit of mutual kindness and mutual support. At the same time, it will take another century of railway communication and intercourse with England to rub off the horror of Prelacy and all its belongings which exists among the humbler classes—at least in country places. A cross over the gable of a church, or a window of stained glass, must still be introduced, in country parishes, with great caution. We observe from a Scotch newspaper, that a country clergyman, within the last six months, introduced a choir of trained singers into his church, in the hope of improving the psalmody. Whenever the choir began the psalm, most of the congregation closed their books, and refused to join in the singing, and many rose and left the church. A choir was introduced into the parish church of a considerable

town in the north of Scotland. Some of the people listened in wonder to its first notes, and then hurried out to escape the profanation, exclaiming, 'They'll be bringing o'er the Pope next!' If a country minister wishes his *precentor* or clerk to appear in a gown and a white neckcloth, instead of entering the desk in a sky-blue coat and scarlet waistcoat, some of his parishioners are sure to trace in the arrangement an undue leaning towards Episcopacy. The minister of a remote parish was presented with a pulpit-gown by his people. The people naturally expected to see it next Sunday, and a larger congregation came to see the gown than would have assembled to hear the sermon. The minister, however, wore no gown. Some of the chief contributors to its expense called at the manse, to express the hope of the parish that the gown might be worn.

'I cannot wear it,' said the minister; 'it is too large for me.'

'Too large!' was the reply; 'it fits elegantly.'

Upon which the enlightened and cultivated gentleman answered—

'No, it is far too large: the tail of it reaches a' the way to Rome!'

No doubt this man would have judged an organ a blasphemous, Satanic, Jewish, Popish, and Prelatic device. But we do not believe that at the present day such a person could be found among the clergy of the farthest presbytery of the Hebrides.

We do not think that the time has come for the general introduction of the organ in Scotland. There

is no use in running in the face of the prejudices of a great number of worthy though narrow and ill-informed persons ; and while the opponents of the organ regard the question as one of principle, its supporters cannot regard the organ as more than a luxury. It is a step in advance that there should be in Scotland such a thing as 'The Organ Question.' The matter is now in debate : at one time the Presbyterian who raised it would have been (morally) knocked on the head. With the increasing enlightenment of the age, and the rapid communication that now exists between the Northern and Southern portions of Britain, it is a mere matter of time till the organ shall be employed wherever its expense can be afforded. It would be highly inexpedient to press it upon the people now. It would retard the period of its general reception. All that can be looked for at present is, that permission should be granted to each congregation to act upon its own judgment in the matter of the organ. It will be introduced first in the churches in the fashionable parts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, next in country parishes where the squire has been educated at Oxford, and ultimately, we doubt not, it will excite as little wonder in Scotland as it does in England now. The tide is flowing surely. But we shall not live to see that time.

Half-material beings as we are, and often the worse for the material things which surround us—which by their very solidity make spiritual things seem shadowy and unreal in the comparison—it is well when we can make (so to speak) a reprisal on the hostile territory,

and get a material thing to conduce to our spiritual advantage. We cannot but think that in all the reasonings of ultra-Presbyterians on the immorality of organs, there is woven a thread of the old Gnostic heresy of the essential evil of matter ; as though the same God who made our spirits capable of being impressed, had not made the material sights and sounds which are capable of impressing them. We are not afraid to argue 'The Organ Question' with Dr. Candlish on the highest and farthest-reaching grounds, though we think it quite sufficiently decided by the ready appeal to common sense. But what greater harm is there in using the organ's notes to waken pious thought and feeling, than in learning a lesson of our decay from the material emblem of the fading leaf, or from the lapse of the passing river ? If it be not wrong to avail ourselves of the natural pensiveness of the departing light, and to go forth like Isaac in the eventide to meditate upon our most solemn concerns,—why is it sinful or degrading to turn to use the native power which the Creator has set in the organ's tones to stir tender and holy emotion ? When we *can* get the Material to yield us any impulse upward, in God's name let us take its aid and be thankful ! And as Dr. Candlish likes authorities, we shall conclude with a better authority than that of Dr. Porteous. *He* tells us that the organ may 'tickle the ear,' but denies its power to touch the heart. Milton thought otherwise : and we believe that *his* words describe the normal influence of the organ on the healthy human mind :—

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale ;
And love the high embowered roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light ;
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.

X.

LIFE AT THE WATER CURE.*

ALL our readers, of course, have heard of the Water Cure; and many of them, we doubt not, have in their own minds ranked it among those eccentric medical systems which now and then spring up, are much talked of for a while, and finally sink into oblivion. The mention of the Water Cure is suggestive of galvanism, homœopathy, mesmerism, the grape cure, the bread cure, the mud-bath cure, and of the views of that gentleman who maintained that almost all the evils, physical and moral, which assail the constitution of man, are the result of the use of salt as an article of food, and may be avoided by ceasing to employ that poisonous and immoral ingredient. Perhaps there is a still more unlucky association with life pills, universal vegetable medicines, and the other appliances of that coarser quackery which yearly brings hundreds of gulli-

* *A Month at Malvern, under the Water Cure.* By R. J. Lane, A.E.R.A. Third Edition. Reconsidered—Rewritten. London: 1855.

Spirits and Water. By R. J. L. London: 1855.

Confessions of a Water-Patient. By Sir E. B. Lytton, Bart.

Hints to the Sick, the Lame, and the Lazy: or, Passages in the Life of a Hydropathist. By a Veteran. London: 1848.

ble Britons to their graves, and contributes thousands of pounds in the form of stamp-duty to the revenue of this great and enlightened country.

It is a curious phase of life that is presented at a Water Cure establishment. The Water Cure system cannot be carried out satisfactorily except at an establishment prepared for the purpose. An expensive array of baths is necessary ; so are well-trained bath servants, and an experienced medical man to watch the process of cure : the mode of life does not suit the arrangements of a family, and the listlessness of mind attendant on the water-system quite unfits a man for any active employment. There must be pure country air to breathe, a plentiful supply of the best water, abundant means of taking exercise—Sir E. B. Lytton goes the length of maintaining that mountains to climb are indispensable ;—and to enjoy all these advantages one must go to a hydropathic establishment. It may be supposed that many odd people are to be met at such a place ; strong-minded women who have broken through the trammels of the Faculty, and gone to the Water Cure in spite of the warnings of their medical men, and their friends' kind predictions that they would never live to come back ; and hypochondriac men, who have tried all quack remedies in vain, and who have come despairingly to try one which, before trying it, they probably looked to as the most violent and perilous of all. And the change of life is total. You may have finished your bottle of port daily for twenty years, but at the Water Cure you must perforce practise total abstinence. For years you may never have tasted fair

water, but here you will get nothing else to drink, and you will have to dispose of your seven or eight tumblers a day. You may have been accustomed to loll in bed of a morning till nine or ten o'clock; but here you must imitate those who would thrive, and 'rise at five:' while the exertion is compensated by your having to bundle off to your chamber at 9.30 P.M. You may long at breakfast for your hot tea, and if a Scotchman, for your grouse pie or devilled kidneys; but you will be obliged to make up with the simpler refreshment of bread and milk, with the accompaniment of stewed Normandy pippins. You may have been wont to spend your days in a fever of business, in a breathless hurry and worry of engagements to be met and matters to be seen to; but after a week under the Water Cure, you will find yourself stretched listlessly upon grassy banks in the summer noon, or sauntering all day beneath the horse-chesnuts of Sudbrook, with a mind as free from business cares as if you were numbered among Tennyson's lotos-eaters, or the denizens of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*. And with God's blessing upon the pure element He has given us in such abundance, you will shortly (*testibus* Mr. Lane and Sir E. B. Lytton) experience other changes as complete, and more agreeable. You will find that the appetite which no dainty could tempt, now discovers in the simplest fare a relish unknown since childhood. You will find the broken rest and the troubled dreams which for years have made the midnight watches terrible, exchanged for the long refreshful sleep that makes one mouthful of the night. You will find the gloom and depression and anxiety

which were growing your habitual temper, succeeded by a lightness of heart and buoyancy of spirit which you cannot account for, but which you thankfully enjoy. We doubt not that some of our readers, filled with terrible ideas as to the violent and perilous nature of the Water Cure, will give us credit for some strength of mind when we tell them that we have proved for ourselves the entire mode of life; we can assure them that there is nothing so very dreadful about it; and we trust they may not smile at us as harmlessly monomaniacal when we say that, without going the lengths its out-and-out advocates do, we believe that in certain states of health much benefit may really be derived from the system.

Sir E. B. Lytton's eloquent *Confessions of a Water-Patient* have been before the public for some years. The *Hints to the Sick, the Lame, and the Lazy*, give us an account of the ailments and recovery of an old military officer, who, after suffering severely from gout, was quite set up by a few weeks at a hydropathic establishment at Marienberg on the Rhine; and who, by occasional recurrence to the same remedy, is kept in such a state of preservation that, though advanced in years, he 'is able to go eight miles within two hours, and can go up hill with most young fellows.' The old gentleman's book, with its odd woodcuts, and a certain freshness and incorrectness of style—we speak grammatically—in keeping with the character of an old soldier, is readable enough. Mr. Lane's books are far from being well written; the *Spirits and Water*, especially, is extremely poor stuff. The *Month at Malvern* is disfigured by similar faults of style; but Mr. Lane

has really something to tell us in that work : and there is a good deal of interest at once in knowing how a man who had been reduced to the last degree of debility of body and mind, was so effectually restored, that now for years he has, on occasion, proved himself equal to a forty-miles walk among the Welsh mountains on a warm summer day ; and also in remarking the boyish exhilaration of spirits in which Mr. Lane writes, which he tells us is quite a characteristic result of ‘initiation into the excitements of the Water Cure.’

Mr. Lane seems to have been in a very bad way. He gives an appalling account of the medical treatment under which he had suffered for nearly thirty years. In spite of it all he found, at the age of forty-five, that his entire system was showing signs of breaking up. He was suffering from neuralgia, which we believe means something like *tic douloureux* extending over the whole body ; he was threatened with paralysis, which had advanced so far as to have benumbed his right side ; his memory was going ; his mind was weakened ; he was, in his own words, ‘no use to anybody :’ there were deep cracks round the edge of his tongue ; his throat was ulcerated ; in short, he was in a shocking state, and never likely to be better. Like many people in such sad circumstances, he had tried all other remedies before thinking of the Water Cure ; he had resorted to galvanism, and so forth, but always got worse. At length, on the 13th of May 1845, Mr. Lane betook himself to Malvern, where Dr. Wilson presides over one of the largest cold-water establishments in the kingdom. In those days there were some

seventy patients in residence, but the newcomer was pleased to find that there was nothing repulsive in the appearance of any of his companions,—a consideration of material importance, inasmuch as the patients breakfast, dine, and sup together. Nothing could have a more depressing effect upon any invalid, than to be constantly surrounded by a crowd of people manifestly dying, or afflicted with visible and disagreeable disease. The fact is, judging from our own experience, that the people who go to the Water Cure are for the most part not suffering from real and tangible ailments, but from maladies of a comparatively fanciful kind,—such as low spirits, shattered nerves, and lassitude, the result of over-work. And our readers may be disposed to think, with ourselves, that the change of air and scene, the return to a simple and natural mode of life, and the breaking off from the cares and engagements of business, have quite as much to do with their restoration as the water-system, properly so called.

The situation of Malvern is well adapted to the successful use of the water system. Sir E. B. Lytton tells us that ‘the air of Malvern is in itself hygeian: the water is immemorially celebrated for its purity: the landscape is a perpetual pleasure to the eye.’ The neighbouring hills offer the exercise most suited to the cure: Priessnitz said, ‘One must have mountains:’ and Dr. Wilson told Mr. Lane, in answer to a remark that the Water Cure had failed at Bath and Cheltenham, that ‘no good and difficult cures can be made in low or damp situations, by swampy grounds, or near the beds of rivers.’

The morning after his arrival, Mr. Lane fairly entered upon the Water System: and his diary for the following month shows us that his time was fully occupied by baths of one sort or another, and by the needful exercise before and after these. The patient is gradually brought under the full force of hydropathy: some of the severer appliances—such as the plunge-bath after packing, and the douche—not being employed till he has been in some degree seasoned and strung up for them. A very short time sufficed to dissipate the notion that there is anything violent or alarming about the Water Cure; and to convince the patient that every part of it is positively enjoyable. There was no shock to the system: there was nothing painful: no nauseous medicines to swallow; no vile bleeding and blistering. Sitz-baths, foot-baths, plunge-baths, douches, and wet-sheet packing, speedily began to do their work upon Mr. Lane; and what with bathing, walking, hill-climbing, eating and drinking, and making up fast friendships with some of his brethren of the Water Cure, he appears to have had a very pleasant time of it. He tells us that he found that—

The palliative and soothing effects of the water treatment are established *immediately*; and the absence of all irritation begets a lull, as instantaneous in its effects upon the frame as that experienced in shelter from the storm.

A sense of present happiness, of joyous spirits, of confidence in my proceedings, possesses me on this, the third day of my stay. I do not say that it is *reasonable* to experience this sudden accession, or that everybody is expected to attribute it to the course of treatment so recently commenced. I only say, *so it is*; and I look for a confirmation of this happy frame of mind, when supported by renewed strength of body.

To the same effect Sir E. B. Lytton :—

Cares and griefs are forgotten: the sense of the present absorbs the past and future: there is a certain freshness and youth which pervade the spirits, and live upon the enjoyment of the actual hour.

And the author of the *Hints to the Sick*, &c.

Should my readers find me prosy, I hope that they will pardon an old fellow, who looks back to his Water Cure course as one of the most delightful portions of a tolerably prosperous life.

When shall we find the subjects of the established system of medical treatment growing eloquent on the sudden accession of spirits consequent on a blister applied to the chest; the buoyancy of heart which attends the operation of six dozen leeches; the youthful gaiety which results from the ‘exhibition’ of a dose of castor oil? It is no small recommendation of the water system, that it makes people so jolly while under it.

But it was not merely present cheerfulness that Mr. Lane experienced: day by day his ailments were melting away. When he reached Malvern he limped painfully, and found it impossible to straighten his right leg, from a strain in the knee. In a week he ‘did not know that he *had* a knee.’ We are not going to follow the detail of his symptoms: suffice it to say that the distressing circumstances already mentioned gradually disappeared; every day he felt stronger and better; the half-paralysed side got all right again; mind and body alike recovered their tone: the ‘month at Malvern’ was followed up by a course of hydro-

pathic treatment at home, such as the exigencies of home-life will permit; and the upshot of the whole was, that from being a wretched invalid, incapable of the least exertion, mental or physical, Mr. Lane was permanently brought to a state of health and strength, activity and cheerfulness. All this improvement he has not the least hesitation in ascribing to the virtue of the Water Cure; and after eight or ten years' experience of the system and its results, his faith in it is stronger than ever.

In quitting Malvern, the following is his review of the sensations of the past month:—

I look back with astonishment at the temper of mind which has prevailed over, the great anxieties that, heavier than my illness, had been bearing their weight upon me. Weakness of body had been chiefly oppressive, because by it I was deprived of the power of alleviating those anxieties; and now, with all that accumulation of mental pressure, with my burden in full cry, and even gaining upon me during the space thus occupied, I have to reflect upon time passed in merriment, and attended by never-failing joyous spirits.

To the distress of mind occasioned by gathering ailments, was added the pain of banishment from home; and yet I have been translated to a life of careless ease. Any one whose knowledge of the solid weight that I carried to this place would qualify him to estimate the state of mind in which I left my home, might well be at a loss to appreciate the influences which had suddenly soothed and exhilarated my whole nature, until alacrity of mind and healthful gaiety became expansive, and the buoyant spirit on the surface was stretched to unbecoming mirth and lightness of heart.

So much for Mr. Lane's experience of the Water Cure. As to its power in acute disease, we shall speak of that hereafter; but its great recommendations

in all cases where the system has been broken down by over-work, are (if we are to credit its advocates) two : first, it braces up body and mind, and restores their healthy tone, in a way that nothing else can; and next, the entire operation by which all this is accomplished, is a course of physical and mental enjoyment.

But by this time we can imagine our readers asking with some impatience, *what is the Water Cure?* What is the precise nature of all those oddly-named appliances by which it produces its results? Now this is just what we are going to explain; but we have sought to set out the benefits ascribed to the system before doing so, in the hope that *that* portion of the human race which shall read these pages, may feel the greater interest in the details which follow, when each of the individuals who compose it remembers, that these sitzes and douches are not merely the things which *set up* Sir E. B. Lytton, Mr. Lane, and our old military friend, but are the things which may some day be called on to revive his own sinking strength and his own drooping spirits. And as the treatment to which all water patients are subjected appears to be much the same, we shall best explain the nature of the various baths by describing them as we ourselves found them.

Our story is a very simple one. Some years since, after a long stretch of excessive College work, we found our strength completely break down. We were languid and dispirited; everything was an effort: we felt that whether study in our case had 'made the mind' or not, it had certainly accomplished the other result which *Festus* ascribes to it, and 'unmade the

body.' We tried sea-bathing, cod-liver oil, and everything else that medical men prescribe to people done up by over study; but nothing did much good. Finally, we determined to throw physic to the dogs, and to try a couple of months at the Water Cure. It *does* cost an effort to make up one's mind to go there, not only because the inexperienced in the matter fancy the water system a very perilous one, but also because one's steady-going friends, on hearing of our purpose, are apt to shake their heads,—perhaps even to tap their foreheads,—to speak doubtfully of our common sense, and express a kind hope—behind our backs, especially—that we are not growing fanciful and hypochondriac, and that we may not end in writing testimonials in favour of Professor Holloway. We have already said that to have the full benefit of the Water Cure, one must go to a hydropathic establishment. There are numbers of these in Germany, and all along the Rhine; and there are several in England, which are conducted in a way more accordant with our English ideas. At Malvern we believe there are two; there is a large one at Ben Rhydding, in Yorkshire; one at Sudbrook Park, between Richmond and Ham; and another at Moor Park, near Farnham. Its vicinity to London led us to prefer the one at Sudbrook; and on a beautiful evening in the middle of May we found our way down through that garden-like country, so green and rich to our eyes, long accustomed to the colder landscapes of the north. Sudbrook Park is a noble place. The grounds stretch for a mile or more along Richmond Park, from which they are

separated only by a wire fence ; the trees are magnificent, the growth of centuries, and among them are enormous hickories, acacias, and tulip-trees ; while horse-chesnuds without number make a very blaze of floral illumination through the leafy month of June. Richmond-hill, with its unrivalled views, rises from Sudbrook Park ; and that *eerie*-looking Ham House, the very ideal of the old English manor-house, with its noble avenues, which make twilight walks all the summer day, is within a quarter of a mile. As for the house itself, it is situated at the foot of the slope on whose summit Pembroke Lodge stands ; it is of great extent, and can accommodate a host of patients, though when we were there, the number of inmates was less than twenty. It is very imposing externally ; but the only striking feature of its interior is the dining-room, a noble hall of forty feet in length, breadth, and height. It is wainscoted with black oak, which some vile wretch of a water doctor *painted white*, on the ground that it darkened the room. As for the remainder of the house, it is divided into commonplace bedrooms and sitting-rooms, and provided with bathing appliances of every conceivable kind. On arriving at a water establishment, the patient is carefully examined, chiefly to discover if anything be wrong about the heart, as certain baths would have a most injurious effect should that be so. The doctor gives his directions to the bath attendant as to the treatment to be followed, which, however, is much the same with almost all patients. The new comer finds a long table in the dining-hall, covered with bread and milk, between six

and seven in the evening ; and here he makes his evening meal with some wry faces. At half-past nine P.M. he is conducted to his chamber, a bare little apartment, very plainly furnished. The bed is a narrow little thing, with no curtains of any kind. One sleeps on a mattress, which feels pretty hard at first. The jolly and contented looks of the patients had tended somewhat to reassure us ; still, we had a nervous feeling that we were fairly *in for it*, and could not divest ourselves of some alarm as to the ordeal before us ; so we heard the nightingale sing for many hours before we closed our eyes on that first night at Sudbrook Park.

It did not seem a minute since we had fallen asleep, when we were awakened by some one entering our room, and by a voice which said, ‘I hef come tu pack yew.’ It was the bath-man, William, to whose charge we had been given, and whom we soon came to like exceedingly ; a most good-tempered, active, and attentive little German. We were very sleepy, and enquired as to the hour ; it was five A.M. There was no help for it, so we scrambled out of bed and sat on a chair, wrapped in the bed-clothes, watching William with sleepy eyes. He spread upon our little bed a very thick and coarse double blanket ; he then produced from a tub what looked like a thick twisted cable, which he proceeded to unrol. It was a sheet of coarse linen, wrung out of the coldest water. And so here was the terrible wet sheet of which we had heard so much. We shuddered with terror. William saw our trepidation, and said, benevolently, ‘Yew vill

soon like him mosh.' He spread out the wet sheet upon the thick blanket, and told us to strip and lie down upon it. Oh ! it was as cold as ice ! William speedily wrapped it around us. Awfully comfortless was the first sensation. We tried to touch the cold damp thing at as few points as possible. It would not do. William relentlessly drew the blanket tight round us ; every inch of our superficies felt the chill of the sheet. Then he placed above us a feather bed, cut out to fit about the head, and stretched no end of blankets over all. 'How long are we to be here?' was our enquiry. 'Fifty minutes,' said William, and disappeared. So there we were, packed in the wet sheet, stretched on our back, our hands pinioned by our sides, as incapable of moving as an Egyptian mummy in its swathes. 'What on earth shall we do,' we remember thinking, 'if a fire breaks out?' Had a robber entered and walked off with our watch and money, we must have lain and looked at him, for we could not move a finger. By the time we had thought all this, the chilly, comfortless feeling was gone ; in ten minutes or less, a sensation of delicious languor stole over us : in a little longer we were fast asleep. We have had many a pack since, and we may say that the feeling is most agreeable when one keeps awake ; body and mind are soothed into an indescribable tranquillity ; the sensation is one of calm, solid enjoyment. In fifty minutes William returned. He removed the blankets and bed which covered us, but left us enveloped in the sheet and coarse blanket. By this time the patient is generally in a profuse perspiration. William turned us

round, and made us slip out of bed upon our feet ; then slightly loosening the lower part of our cerements, so that we could walk with difficulty, he took us by the shoulders and guided our unsteady steps out of our chamber, along a little passage, into an apartment containing a plunge bath. The bath was about twelve feet square ; its floor and sides covered with white encaustic tiles ; the water, clear as crystal against that light background, was five feet deep. In a trice we were denuded of our remaining apparel, and desired to plunge into the bath, head first. The whole thing was done in less time than it has taken to describe it : no caloric had escaped : we were steaming like a coach horse that has done its ten miles within the hour on a summer day ; and it certainly struck us that the Water Cure had some rather violent measures in its repertory. We went a step or two down the ladder, and then plunged in overhead. ‘One plunge more and out,’ exclaimed the faithful William ; and we obeyed. We were so thoroughly heated beforehand, that we never felt the bath to be cold. On coming out, a coarse linen sheet was thrown over us, large enough to have covered half-a-dozen men, and the bath-man rubbed us, ourselves aiding in the operation, till we were all in a glow of warmth. We then dressed as fast as possible, postponing for the present the operation of shaving, drank two tumblers of cold water, and took a rapid walk round the *wilderness* (an expanse of shrubbery near the house is so called), in the crisp, fresh morning air. The sunshine was of the brightest ; the dew was on the grass ; everybody was early there ; fresh-looking

patients were walking in all directions at the rate of five miles an hour ; the gardeners were astir ; we heard the cheerful sound of the mower whetting his scythe ; the air was filled with the freshness of the newly-cut grass, and with the fragrance of lilac and hawthorn blossom ; and all this by half-past six A.M. ! How we pitied the dullards that were lagging a-bed on that bright summer morning ! One turn round the wilderness occupied ten minutes : we then drank two more tumblers of water, and took a second turn of ten minutes. Two tumblers more, and another turn ; and then, in a glow of health and good humour, into our chamber to dress for the day. The main supply of water is drunk before breakfast ; we took six tumblers daily at that time, and did not take more than two or three additional in the remainder of the day. By eight o'clock breakfast was on the table in the large hall, where it remained till half-past nine. Bread, milk, water, and stewed pippins (cold), formed the morning meal. And didn't we polish it off ! The accession of appetite is immediate.

Such is the process entitled the *Pack and Plunge*. It was the beginning of the day's proceedings during the two months we spent at Sudbrook. We believe it forms the morning treatment of almost every patient ; a shallow bath after packing being substituted for the plunge in the case of the more nervous. With whatever apprehension people may have looked forward to being *packed* before having experienced the process, they generally take to it kindly after a single trial. The pack is perhaps the most popular part of the entire cold water treatment.

Mr. Lane says of it :—

What occurred during a full hour after this operation (being packed) I am not in a condition to depose, beyond the fact that the sound, sweet, soothing sleep which I enjoyed, was a matter of surprise and delight. I was detected by Mr. Bardon, who came to awake me, smiling, like a great fool, at nothing ; if not at the fancies which had played about my slumbers. Of the *heat* in which I found myself, I must remark, that it is as distinct from perspiration, as from the parched and throbbing glow of fever. The pores are open, and the warmth of the body is soon communicated to the sheet ; until—as in this my first experience of the luxury—a breathing, steaming heat is engendered, which fills the whole of the wrappers, and is plentifully shown in the smoking state which they exhibit as they are removed. I shall never forget the luxurious ease in which I awoke on this morning, and looked forward with pleasure to the daily repetition of what had been quoted to me by the uninitiated with disgust and shuddering.

Sir E. B. Lytton says of the pack :—

Of all the curatives adopted by hydropathists, it is unquestionably the safest—the one that can be applied without danger to the greatest variety of cases ; and which, I do not hesitate to aver, can rarely, if ever, be misapplied in any case where the pulse is hard and high, and the skin dry and burning. Its theory is that of warmth and moisture, those friendliest agents to inflammatory disorders.

I have been told, or have read (says Mr. Lane), put a man into the wet sheet who had contemplated suicide, and it would turn him from his purpose. At least I will say, let me get hold of a man who has a pet enmity, who cherishes a vindictive feeling, and let me introduce him to the soothing process. I believe that his bad passion would not linger in its old quarters three days, and that after a week his leading desire would be to hold out the hand to his *late* enemy.

Of the sensation in the pack, Sir E. B. Lytton tells us :—

The momentary chill is promptly succeeded by a gradual and vivifying warmth, perfectly free from the irritation of *dry* heat; a delicious sense of ease is usually followed by a sleep more agreeable than anodynes ever produced. It seems a positive cruelty to be relieved from this magic girdle, in which pain is lulled, and fever cooled, and watchfulness lapped in slumber.

The hydropathic breakfast at Sudbrook being over, at nine o'clock we had a foot-bath. This is a very simple matter. The feet are placed in a tub of cold water, and rubbed for four or five minutes by the bathman. The philosophy of this bath is thus explained :—

The soles of the feet and the palms of the hands are extremely sensitive, having abundance of nerves, as we find if we tickle them. If the feet are put often into *hot* water, they will become habitually *cold*, and make one more or less delicate and nervous. On the other hand, by rubbing the feet often in cold water, they will become permanently warm. A cold foot-bath will stop a violent fit of hysterics. Cold feet show a defective circulation.

At half-past ten in the forenoon we were subjected to by far the most trying agent in the water system—the often-mentioned *douche*. No patient is allowed to have the *douche* till he has been acclimated by at least a fortnight's treatment. Our readers will understand that from this hour onward we are describing not our first Sudbrook day, but a *representative day*, such as our days were when we had got into the full play of the system. The *douche* consists of a stream of water, as thick as one's arm, falling from a height of twenty-four feet. A pipe, narrowing to the end, conducts the stream for the first six feet of its fall, and gives it a somewhat slanting direction. The water falls, we need hardly

say, with a tremendous rush, and is beaten to foam on the open wooden floor. There were two douches at Sudbrook : one, of a somewhat milder nature, being intended for the lady patients. Every one is a little nervous at first taking this bath. One cannot be too warm before having it ; we always took a rapid walk of half an hour, and came up to the ordeal glowing like a furnace. The faithful William was waiting our arrival, and ushered us into a little dressing-room, where we disrobed. William then pulled a cord, which let loose the formidable torrent, and we hastened to place ourselves under it. The course is to back gradually till it falls upon the shoulders, then to sway about till every part of the back and limbs has been played upon : but great care must be taken not to let the stream fall upon the head, where its force would probably be dangerous. The patient takes this bath at first for one minute ; the time is lengthened daily till it reaches four minutes, and there it stops. The sensation is that of a violent continuous force assailing one ; we are persuaded that were a man blindfolded, and so deaf as not to hear the splash of the falling stream, he could not for his life tell what was the cause of the terrible shock he was enduring. It is not in the least like the result of water : indeed it is unlike any sensation we ever experienced elsewhere. At the end of our four minutes the current ceases ; we enter the dressing-room, and are rubbed as after the plunge-bath. The reaction is instantaneous : the blood is at once called to the surface. ‘Red as a rose were we :’ we were more than warm ; we were absolutely *hot*.

Although most patients come to like the douche, it is always to be taken with caution. That it is dangerous in certain conditions of the body, there is no doubt. Sir E. B. Lytton speaks strongly on this point :—

Never let the eulogies which many will pass upon the douche tempt you to take it on the sly, unknown to your adviser. The douche is dangerous when the body is unprepared—when the heart is affected—when apoplexy may be feared.

After having douched, which process was over by eleven, we had till one o'clock without further treatment. We soon came to feel that indisposition to active employment which is characteristic of the system ; and these two hours were given to sauntering, generally alone, in the green avenues and country lanes about Ham and Twickenham ; but as we have already said something of the charming and thoroughly English scenes which surround Sudbrook, we shall add nothing further upon that subject now—though the blossoming horse-chestnuts and the sombre cedars of Richmond Park, the bright stretches of the Thames, and the quaint gateways and terraces of Ham House, the startled deer and the gorse-covered common, all picture themselves before our mind at the mention of those walks, and tempt us sorely.

At one o'clock we returned to our chamber, and had a head-bath. We lay upon the ground for six minutes, if we remember rightly, with the back of our head in a shallow vessel of water.

Half-past one was the dinner hour. All the patients were punctually present ; those who had been longest in the house occupying the seats next those of Dr. and

Mrs. Ellis, who presided at either end of the table. The dinners were plain, but abundant; and the guests brought with them noble appetites, so that it was agreed on all hands that there never was such beef or mutton as that of Sudbrook. Soup was seldom permitted: plain joints were the order of the day, and the abundant use of fresh vegetables was encouraged. Plain puddings, such as rice and sago, followed; there was plenty of water to drink. A number of men-servants waited, among whom we recognised our friend William, disguised in a white stock. The entertainment did not last long. In half-an-hour the ladies withdrew to their drawing-room, and the gentlemen dispersed themselves about the place once more.

Dinner being dispatched, there came the same listless sauntering about till four o'clock, when the pack and plunge of the morning were repeated. At half-past six we had another head-bath. Immediately after it there was supper, which was a *facsimile* of breakfast. Then, more sauntering in the fading twilight, and at half-past nine we paced the long corridor leading to our chamber, and speedily were sound asleep. No midnight tossings, no troubled dreams; one long deep slumber till William appeared next morning at five, to begin the round again.

Such was our life at the Water Cure: a contrast as complete as might be to the life which preceded and followed it. Speaking for ourselves, we should say that there is a great deal of exaggeration in the accounts we have sometimes read of the restorative influence of the system. It wrought no miracle in our case. A couple

of months at the sea-side would probably have produced much the same effect. We did not experience that extreme exhilaration of spirits which Mr. Lane speaks of. Perhaps the soft summer climate of Surrey, in a district rather over-wooded, wanted something of the bracing quality which dwells in the keener air of the Malvern hills. Yet the system strung us up wonderfully, and sent us home with much improved strength and heart. And since that time, few mornings have dawned on which we have not tumbled into the cold bath on first rising, and, following the process by a vigorous rubbing with towels of extreme roughness, experienced the bracing influence of cold water alike on the body and the mind.

We must give some account of certain other baths, which have not come within our course latterly, though we have at different times tried them all. We have mentioned the *sitz-bath*; here is its nature:—

It is not disagreeable, but very odd: and exhibits the patient in by no means an elegant or dignified attitude. For this bath it is not necessary to undress, the coat only being taken off, and the shirt gathered under the waistcoat, which is buttoned upon it; and when seated in the water, which rises to the waist, a blanket is drawn round and over the shoulders. Having remained ten minutes in this condition, we dried and rubbed ourselves with coarse towels, and after ten minutes' walk, proceeded to supper with a good appetite.

The soothing and tranquillising effect of the *sitz* is described as extraordinary:—

In sultry weather, when indolence seems the only resource, a *sitz* of ten minutes at noon will suffice to protect against the enervating effect of heat, and to rouse from listlessness and inactivity.

If two or three hours have been occupied by anxious conversation, by many visitors, or by any of the perplexities of daily occurrence, a sitz will effectually relieve the throbbing head, and fit one for a return (if it must be so) to the turmoil and bustle.

If an anxious letter is to be mentally weighed, or an important letter to be answered, the matter and the manner can be under no circumstances so adequately pondered as in the sitz. How this quickening of the faculties is engendered, and by what immediate action it is produced, I cannot explain, and invite others to test it by practice.

I have in my own experience proved the sitz to be cogittatory, consolatory, quiescent, refrigeratory, revivificatory, or all these together.

One of the least agreeable processes in the water system is being *sweated*. Mr. Lane describes his sensations as follows :—

At five o'clock in walked the executioner who was to initiate me into the sweating process. There was nothing awful in the commencement. Two dry blankets were spread upon the mattress, and I was enveloped in them as in the wet sheet, being well and closely tucked in round the neck, and the head raised on two pillows. Then came my old friend the down bed, and a counterpane.

At first I felt very comfortable, but in ten minutes the irritation of the blanket was disagreeable, and endurance was my only resource ; *thought* upon other subjects out of the question. In half-an-hour I wondered when it would begin to act. At six, in came Bardon to give me water to drink. Another hour, and I was getting into a state. I had for ten minutes followed Bardon's directions, by slightly moving my hands and legs, and the profuse perspiration was a relief ; besides, I knew that I should be soon fit to be *bathed*, and what a tenfold treat ! He gave me more water ; and in a quarter of an hour he returned, when I stepped, in a precious condition, into the cold bath, Bardon using more water on my head and shoulders than usual, more

rubbing and spunging, and afterwards more vigorous *dry* rubbing. I was more than pink, and hastened to get out and compare notes with Sterling.

By the sweating process, the twenty-eight miles of tubing which exist in the pores of the skin are effectually relieved; and—in Dr. Wilson's words—‘you lose a little *water*, and put yourself in a state to make *flesh*.’ The sweating process is known at water establishments as the ‘blanket pack.’

We believe we have mentioned every hydropathic appliance that is in common use, with the exception of what is called the ‘rub in a wet sheet.’ This consists in having a sheet, dripping wet, thrown round one, and in being vehemently rubbed by the bath-man, the patient assisting. The effect is very bracing and exhilarating on a sultry summer day; and this treatment has the recommendation that it is applied and done with in the course of a few minutes; nor does it need any preliminary process. It is just the thing to get the bath-man to administer to a friend who has come down to visit one, as a slight taste of the quality of the Water Cure.

One pleasing result of the treatment is, that the skin is made beautifully soft and white. Another less pleasing circumstance is, that when there is any impurity lurking in the constitution, a fortnight's treatment brings on what is called a *crisis*, in which the evil is driven off in the form of an eruption all over the body. This result never follows unless where the patient has been in a most unhealthy state. People who merely need a little bracing up need not have the

least fear of it. Our own two months of water never produced the faintest appearance of such a thing.

Let us sum up the characteristics of the entire system in the words of Sir E. B. Lytton :—

The first point which impressed me was the extreme and utter *innocence* of the water-cure in skilful hands—in any hands, indeed, not thoroughly new to the system.

The next thing that struck me was the extraordinary ease with which, under this system, good habits are acquired and bad habits are relinquished.

That which, thirdly, impressed me, was no less contrary to all my preconceived opinions. I had fancied that, whether good or bad, the system must be one of great hardship, extremely repugnant and disagreeable. I wondered at myself to find how soon it became so associated with pleasurable and grateful feelings as to dwell upon the mind as one of the happiest passages of existence.

We have left ourselves no space to say anything of the effect of the Water Cure in acute disease. It is said to work wonders in the case of gout, and all rheumatic complaints: the severe suffering occasioned by the former vexatious malady is immediately subdued, and the necessity of colchicum and other deleterious drugs is obviated. Fever and inflammation, too, are drawn off by constant packing, without being allowed to run their usual course. Our readers may find remarkable cures of heart and other diseases recorded at pages 24, 72, 114, and 172 of the *Month at Malvern*. We quote the account of one case :—

I was introduced to a lady, that I might receive her own report of her cure. She had been *for nine years paralysed from the waist downwards*; pale and emaciated; and coming to Malvern, she had no idea of recovering the use of her limbs, but merely

bodily health. In five months she became ruddy, and then her perseverance in being packed twice every day was rewarded. The returning muscular power was advanced to *perfect recovery of the free use of her limbs*. She grew stout and strong, and now *walks ten miles daily*.

We confess we should like to have this story confirmed by some competent authority. It appears to verge on the impossible : unless, indeed, the fact was that the lady was some nervous, fanciful person, who took up a hypochondriac idea that she was paralysed, and got rid of the notion by having her constitution braced up.

We trust we have succeeded in persuading those who have glanced over these pages, that the Water Cure is by no means the violent thing which they have in all probability been accustomed to consider it. There is no need for being nervous about going to it. There is nothing about it that is half such a shock to the system as are blistering and mercury, purgatives and drastics, leeches and the lancet. Almost every appliance within its range is a source of positive enjoyment ; the time spent under it is a cheerful holiday to body and mind.

We take it to be quackery and absurdity to maintain that all possible diseases can be cured by the cold water system ; but, from our own experience, we believe that the system *and its concomitants* do tend powerfully to brace and re-invigorate, when mental exertion has told upon the system, and even threatened to break it down. But really it is no new discovery that fresh air and water, simple food and abundant exercise, change of scene and intermission of toil and excitement, tend

to brace the nerves and give fresh vigour to the limbs. In the only respect in which we have any confidence in the Water Cure, it is truly no new system at all. We did not need Priessnitz to tell us that the fair element which, in a hundred forms, makes so great a part of Creation's beauty—trembling, crystal-clear, upon the rosebud; gleaming in the sunset river; spreading, as we see it to-day, in the bright blue summer sea; fleecy-white in the silent clouds, and gay in the evening rainbow,—is the true elixir of health and life, the most exhilarating draught, the most soothing anodyne; the secret of physical enjoyment, and mental buoyancy and vigour.

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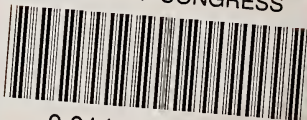
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